

VERBAL COMMUNICATION VIA TRANSLATION

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Abstract

Our paper approaches the verbal communication functions proposed by R. Jakobson, namely: the emotive, conative, phatic, metalinguistic, referential and poetic functions, which position the translation process and the core issues related to synonymy within the dynamic framework of communication. Each function instantiation through translation is illustrated via excerpts from *Amintiri din copilărie* by I.Creanga, translated by Yves Augé, and *Povestiri* by V.Voiculescu, translated by I.Badescu. Another objective of the present paper is to highlight some particular difficulties with which the translator is confronted, in his position of a receiver who is more “informed” than the average addressee. We will also examine the impact of the poetic function upon the synonymy phenomena at the translation level.

Keywords: language functions, communication, translation, synonymy, text, paradigmatic axis, syntagmatic axis.

It is well known that Jakobson’s communication model has become the basis of any act of communication. Its author assigns it essentially to the poetic framework.

According to R. Jakobson, poetics addresses the issues related to verbal structure. Since linguistics is the global science of the verbal structure, poetics draws on the achievements of linguistics.

Obviously, poetics also deals with other means and methods beyond the art of words. Many poetic elements pertain not only to the science of language, but also to the theory of signs, namely to semiotics.

In what follows, we are going to explore Jakobson’s model of language functions that place translation and the issues related to synonymy within the dynamic framework of communication. Each function will be illustrated via excerpts from *Amintiri din copilărie* by Ion Creangă, translated by Yves Augé and *Povestiri* by V. Voiculescu, translated by Irina Bădescu.

The synonymy-translation relationship will be envisaged solely from the perspective of the poetic function.

R.Jakobson distinguishes six functions of verbal communication, namely the referential function, the poetic function, the emotive function, the conative function, the phatic function and the metalinguistic function.

Our main objective is to illustrate the instantiation of these six functions at the level of translation by means of various excerpts.

1. THE EMOTIVE FUNCTION

The emotive function focuses on the addresser (sender); communication aims at expressing directly the addresser’s own attitude towards what he/she is speaking about. It tends to express a certain emotion be it real or feigned.

The purely emotive layer of language is best exemplified by interjections. The emotive function that underlies interjections adds a unique phonic, grammatical and lexical flavour to all our utterances. If we analyze communication from the point of view of the information transmitted, we cannot confine the notion of information within the limits of the cognitive aspect of language. A speaker who uses expressive elements to show his/her disagreement or ironic stance is sure to convey ostensible information as well.

The emotive function can be identified in a wide variety of translated texts; however, the most interesting seem to be the autobiographical texts, more precisely the memories, such as *Amintiri din copilărie* by Ion Creangă. Such memories are usually narrated in the first person, making up a narrative of the homodiegetic type,

according to Gérard Genette's classification. (Genette, 1994)

As an example, consider the beginning of the second part of *Amintiri din copilărie*: „Nu știu alții cum sînt, dar eu, cînd mă gîndesc la locul nașterii mele, la casa părintească din Humulești, la stîlpul hornului unde lega mama o șfară cu motocei la capăt, de crăpau mîțele jucîndu-se cu ei, la prichiciul vetei cel humuit, de care mă țineam cînd începusem a merge copăcel, la cuptorul pe care mă ascundeam, cînd ne jucam noi băeții de-a mijoarca, și la alte jocuri și jucării pline de hazul și farmecul copilăresc, parcă-mi saltă și acum inima de bucurie! Și, Doamne, frumos era pe atunci: căci și părinții și frații și surorile îmi erau sănătoși, și casa ni era îndestulată, și copiii și copilele megieșilor erau de-a pururea în petrecere cu noi, și toate îmi mergeau după plac, fără leac de supărare, de parcă era toată lumea a mea!

Și eram vesel ca vremea cea bună, și șturlubatic și copilăros ca vîntul în tulburarea sa” (Creangă, 1963).

Undoubtedly, the text displays directly the author's feelings, presented through the filter of the narrator. In fact, the emotional charge is twofold, since the author-narrator's emotional state adds to the joy and excitement of the childhood years envisaged.

The translation as a third emotional level has to accurately render all these emotional shades, as it is the case with Yves Augé's /translation into French (Creangă, 1963).

«Je ne sais comment sont les autres, mais moi, quand je pense aux lieux où je suis né, à la maison paternelle de Humulești, au pilier de la cheminée où maman attachait une ficelle garnie de papillottes – ah ! ce que les chats pouvaient jouer avec ! – au rebord de l'âtre glaisé où je m'appuyais quand j'ai commencé à me tenir sur mes petites jambes, au four sur lequel je me blottissais quand on jouait à cligne-musette, à tant de jeux pleins de gaieté et de charme puéril, mon coeur bondit encore d'allégresse. Ah, Seigneur ! quelle bonne vie c'était alors ! car mes parents, mes frères et mes soeurs étaient pleins de santé, rien ne manquait à la maison, les gamins et les gamines des voisins s'amusaient tout le temps avec nous et je n'en faisais qu'à ma guise. On aurait dit que le monde entier était à moi !

Et j'étais gai comme le beau temps, guilleret et espiègle comme la brise quand elle folâtre.»

Nevertheless, it's worth noting that the translator removes certain emotional markers, such as the expression *fără leac de supărare* – which couldn't be literally translated.

2. THE CONATIVE FUNCTION

In the case of the conative function, communication is oriented toward the addressee (receiver).

The conative function is best illustrated by vocatives and imperatives, which deviate from the other verbal or nominal categories from a syntactic, morphologic and phonologic point of view. Imperative sentences differ essentially from declarative sentences. Declarative sentences can be tested for their truthfulness, while imperative sentences are not liable to a truth test.

The conative function occurs very frequently in the dialogic narratives, where the characters speak to each other, as it is the case of the following excerpt from V.Voiculescu's *Schimnicul*, where the main character achieves performative speech acts, more precisely orders: „- *Ascultați: îndată ce s-arată lupul, trageți clopotul cel mare într-o dungă, ca la primejdie. Am s-aud și am să știu. Acu plecați.*” (Voiculescu, 1988).

One can definitely identify a whole series of speech acts meant to influence not only the immediate addressee, but also the whole community that will most likely react *au son du tocsin au bourdon* (to the sound of the alarm-bell).

It is worth noticing that *le son du tocsin au bourdon* (the sound of the alarm-bell) is envisaged as some sort of a feed-back from the receiver's part: *Am s-aud și am să știu* (I'm going to hear it and know what's going on)

In this context, Irina Bădescu's translation successfully renders all these implicatures: „ – *Ecoutez: dès que le loup paraît, faites sonner le tocsin au bourdon. Je l'entendrai et saurai de quoi il s'agit. Maintenant, partez.*” (Bădescu, I. 1984).

3. THE PHATIC FUNCTION

The phatic function allows reinforcing, prolonging or interrupting the chain of communication. It signals whether the communication channel or circuit works properly. It serves to draw the interlocutor's attention or to confirm that he/she has grasped the message correctly.

The phatic function may take the form of a profuse exchange of ritualized formulae, of entire dialogues which aim at prolonging communication.

As it is known, the phatic function intervenes when the addresser has to repeat the message that the addressee hasn't understood correctly – by repeating the element/part that hasn't been grasped or by providing supplementary explanations.

An illustrative example is set by the following excerpt from the short story *Lacul rău* by V.Voiculescu, where the receivers express directly the fact that they have not understood the message, while the sender resolves the misunderstanding: „Bătrâna bătea tot mai aprig în cruce apele cu toiagul. După câteva șovăiri turta porni din nou ca o corăbiuță făcută de copii, de data asta îndreptându-se spre copca răzlețită către care se țintise toiagul Saviliei, unde se opri. Și nu se mai clinti din loc. Se zărea acolo, ca o foaie de nufăr pe care licăreau cinci lacrimi de lumină.

- Acolo e Gheorghieș, arăta bătrâna, închinând neconținut cu cârja.

Oamenii priveau nedumeriți. Nu înțelegeau ...

- Trei zile sufletul nu se dezlipește de trup, lămurii ea, mereu îi joacă împrejur. Nu se îndură să-l părăsească.” (Voiculescu, 1988).

All these tinges that contribute to the complexity of the phatic function are well understood and rendered by the translator:

“*La vieille continuait, de sa béquille, à battre l'eau en forme de croix, mais elle redoubla d'efforts. Après une brève hésitation, le tourteau reparti, telle une nef fragile sortie des mains des enfants, se dirigeant vers le recoin que Savila avait désigné de sa béquille, où il s'arrêta. Et ne bougea plus. On l'y apercevait, pareil à une feuille de nénuphar où tremblotaient cinq larmes de lumières.*

- Il est là, Gheorghieș^o, dit-elle, toujours sans cesser de faire le signe de la croix à la face des eaux.

Les gens regardaient, tout éblouis. Ils n'y comprenaient rien ...

Trois jours durant, expliqua-t-elle, l'âme se tient auprès du corps, ne cesse de lui tourner autour. Elle ne peut se décider à l'abandonner.” (Bădescu, I. 1984).

4. THE METALINGUISTIC FUNCTION

The metalinguistic function is centred on the code. It concerns the use of language to describe or to explain itself. The metalinguistic function is not only a scientific tool used by logicians and

linguists, but it also plays an important role in our everyday communication. There are cases when we use metalanguage without being aware of the metalingual character of our statements. Most often than not, the addresser and/or the addressee need to check up whether they use the same code; in such cases, communication is focused on the code itself.

In the following example, the internal addressee inquires about the meaning of the term *practica comună* and the addresser provides the required explanations: „M-aș închina, zisei, dacă vrăjitorul cu un fluier fermecat la gură ar fi ieșit din casă în fruntea unui alai de porci încolonați și i-ar fi cules și pe cei din curte.

Dar așa se vede cât de colo că a folosit un procedeu de practică comună.

- Cum comună? Ce vrei să spui?

- Vreau să spun, că orișicine poate face ca el.” (Voiculescu, 1988).

Since the term concerned contains neologisms, its translation into French does not raise particular problems.

5. THE REFERENTIAL FUNCTION

As we have already mentioned, the referential function is performed whenever communication focuses on the context. In the *classical* narrative, the writer often describes the context of the story he narrates. Most often than not, the narrator describes the place that provides the space framework for the character, for the character's actions, as well as for the actions that impact on him/her.

The context can be envisaged as a phrase or even as a functional stylistic language variation. It represents the genuine dynamic element in meaning production.

The synonymy realized in the context is the basis of the lexical competence of the speakers of a language (Descamps, 1992).

In what follows we are going to examine the notion of *context* in greater detail.

First, we have realized, after a minute review of the context theory, that a complete definition of context is yet to be formulated. On the other hand, there are no detailed applications on the notion of *context* in reference to translation. *Le Petit Robert* provides a general definition of the

context: "Ensemble du texte qui entoure un élément de la langue (mot, phrase, fragment d'énoncé) et dont dépend son sens, sa valeur." (Robert, 1968) - "the part of the text surrounding a particular language element (word, sentence, part of a statement/utterance, on which its meaning and value depend.")

According to Tatiana Slama-Cazacu, the meaning of this term needs to be further expanded and developed, so as to incorporate the complex, evolving language realities (Slama-Cazacu, 1959).

Frankly speaking, the context, as well as the whole text on the basis of which any linguistic phenomenon is interpreted, involves a structure of specific properties that are determined by the intention of communication, of the meaning conveyed, of the possibility of interpretation by the receiver (Slama-Cazacu, 1959).

The usual notion of *context* is rather ambiguous. It serves to designate the verbal surrounding of a sentence, as well as the data determining the specificity of a given communication situation (the type of the moment, the place when/where the enunciations are uttered, the social status of the interlocutors, etc.) (Maingueneau, 1993).

As for the difference between context and text, the text is regarded « consequently, as an abstract object resulting from the subtraction of the context performed on the empirical object (the discourse) (Tutescu, 1980).

However, there are texts centred on the referential function, whose essential component is the context (Lundquist, 1983).

The context usually refers to the *textual context*, that is the surrounding text, and to the *situational context*, namely the situation where the text is produced (Nicolae, 1990).

It is worth noting that the importance of the context depends on the value, on the way in which the text and the sentences are formed and even on the significant value of the environment as a whole for the speaker, as well as for the hearer.

In order to illustrate the various types of contexts we have chosen an excerpt from the novel *Les frères Karamazov* by F.M. Dostoevski, translated into Romanian and into French. Therefore it's a translation comprising a source language and two target languages, which capture the contextual dynamics better.

The broad context of the excerpt under analysis is the church - a positive ideal for society. Dostoevski envisages the church in terms of fraternal love, where each individual is guilty toward the others and toward God.

The central theme of the novel is represented by mutual relationships, by the interpenetration of all "worlds" (Dostoevski, 1973).

Our choice for the narrow context is the chapter *Le Grand Inquisiteur* from the above-mentioned novel - *Les frères Karamazov*. The action of the chapter takes place during the most dreadful period of the Inquisition, when the pyres used to burn every day for the glory of God. Jesus-Christ himself wanted to visit His children, precisely amidst the heretics' crackling pyres.

The linguistic features of the novel require an appropriate language register - namely the semantic field of *faith/belief*. The spiritual, religious specific language is pervasive in each communication situation. In order to validate our assertions from the translation perspective we are going to turn our attention to several types of contexts that incorporate the set of lexemes used in a sentence in three language versions: Russian, Romanian and French.

1. Saturated context - the set of lexemes used in a sentence gives a specific semantic charge to the sentence marked by the religious isotopy:

„Ona velit vsem *sveatîm*, vsem *mucenicam*, vsem *anghelam* i *arhanghelam* pasti vmeste s neiu i *moliti* o *pomilovanii* vseh bez razbora.” (Dostoevski, 1986).

“Elle ordonne à tous les *saints*, à tous les *martyrs*, à tous les *anges* de *tomber à genoux* avec Elle et *d'implorer* la grâce des pécheurs, sans distinction” (Dostoevski, 1973).

„Maica precistă se adresează *sfinților*, mucenicilor și tuturor *îngerilor* și *arhanghelilor*, solicitându-i să cadă împreună cu ea la *picioarele domnului* și să ceară îndurare pentru toți păcătoșii, absolut toți, fără nici o deosebire.” (Dostoevski, 1923).

2. Half-saturated context marked indirectly through the invocation of Jesus-Christ :

„Po bezmernomu *miloserdiu svoemu*, on prohodit eșcio raz mejdu liudei v tom samom obraze celoveceskom, v kotorom hodil tri goda mejdu liudimi piatnadțati vekov nazad.” (Dostoevski, 1986).

“Dans *Sa miséricorde infinie, il revient parmi les hommes sous sa forme qu’il avait durant les trois ans de sa vie publique*” (Magureanu, 1984).

„În nemărginita *lui îndurare, voia să umble din nou printre oameni cu chipul pe care-l purtase cu cinsprezece veacuri în urmă.*” (Voiculescu, 1988).

After having identified the types of contexts illustrated by the above-mentioned examples, we can acknowledge the fact that the broad context is highly permeated by lexemes that pertain essentially to the same semantic field. More precisely, in our case, they represent synonymic series whose terms cannot be mutually substituted. Once again, synonymous substitution cannot occur in a marked context anymore (Jakobson, 1964). The lexemes carry religious connotations.

The narrow context comprises lexemes that limit the semantic area to a specific semantic field.

Within the broad context one can identify a hierarchical organization of the religious terms: *saints, martyres, anges, la grâce des pécheurs* (saints, martyrs, angels, the sinners’ grace), and a series of lexemes that refer indirectly to religion: *tomber à genoux, implorer* (fall on their knees, beg). The narrow context comprises only one religious term: *Il* (that is God) and an “indirectly” religious term: *la miséricorde* (the mercy).

The referential function plays a very important role in the translation process. It involves the narrow context of the writing (the micro-context), as well as the broad context, especially the socio-cultural elements (the macro-context), as we have seen above.

6. THE POETIC FUNCTION

Communication focuses on the message. This function cannot be efficiently apprehended but by setting it in relation with the general problems of language. On the other hand, the study of language requires a thorough consideration of its poetic function. Any attempt to reduce the sphere of the poetic function to poetry or to confine poetry to the poetic function is likely to lead to delusive over-simplification. The poetic function is not the sole function of the art of communication; nevertheless, it is its dominant,

determining function. In all other verbal activities the poetic function acts as a subsidiary, accessory constituent.

By supporting the palpability of signs, the poetic function deepens the fundamental dichotomy of signs and objects. Consequently, when dealing with the poetic function, linguistics cannot be narrowed down to poetry alone. That is why we have expanded this function to the stylistic and translating function.

The linguistic study of the poetic function must therefore transcend the limits of poetry. The specificities of the various poetic genres involve other verbal functions that add to the dominant poetic function.

Epic poetry, for instance, focusing on the third person, employs the referential function to a great extent, whereas lyric poems, written in the first person, make extensive use of the emotive function. The poetry written in the second person is permeated by the conative function.

The following excerpt clearly displays a case of communication centred on the message. After all, V.Voiculescu is a poet who sets himself to write in prose and, in order to do that, he resorts to the whole range of poetic discourse genres:

“*Curând intrară în codru ca într-un basm. Toamna îl preschimbase într-un uriaș chihlimbar galben, încrustat cu vine de verde, cu ochiuri de albastru și bucăți de azur, prin miezul amurgit al căruia mergeau ei. Înaintea lor sălta, resfirându-și creasta, o pasăre stropită cu negru, cu aur și cu roșu. Se oprea, ciocănea într-un trunchi și iar zbura, ca și cum le-ar fi arătat calea*” (Bădescu, I. 1984).

In this excerpt the author projects, to use Jakobson’s terminology, the axis of selection upon the axis of combination, in other words, the paradigmatic axis upon the syntagmatic axis (Miclau, 1983).

We have already highlighted the discursive elements that signal V.Voiculescu’s obvious concern for selecting on the paradigmatic axis poetic elements such as: the comparison – *ca într-un basm, ca și cum le-ar fi arătat calea*; the processual metaphor followed by a whole series of figurative epithets: *toamna îl preschimbase într-un uriaș chihlimbar galben, încrustat cu vine de verde, cu ochiuri de albastru și bucăți de azur.*

Such excerpts do raise many translation problems, which we are going to examine in the last section of our study.

However, here is the translation done by Irina Bădescu: *“Bientôt ils pénétraient dans la forêt qui s'ouvrit, pour les accueillir, comme un conte de fées. L'automne l'avait changée en une immensité d'ambre jaune veiné de vert, incrusté de bleu et niellé d'azur, dont ils traversaient le coeur d'un fauve crépusculaire. Au-devant d'eux, un oiseau tacheté, noir, rouge et or, sautillait dans le chemin en déployant sa crête. Il s'arrêtait, donnait quelques coups de bec dans un tronc d'arbre, puis reprenait son vol, comme pour leur montrer la route”* (Ulianitki, 1901).

After having examined the way in which the six language functions are realized in the texts pertaining to the source language, we are going to turn our attention toward some specific problems that these functions are likely to raise during the translation process.

The translator confronts him/herself with a text to be translated from the position of a receiver who is more informed than the average addressee. He is endowed with a neatly superior competence; he is a discerning reader who possesses more refined “equipment”, he has “feelers” that enable him to seize the most subtle tinges of the original version. It is often said that the translation presupposes a full reading of the original.

The first language function that the translator as a reader of the original version performs is the conative function. The text to be translated often engenders specific interpretation problems; it is mainly the case of old texts that comprise philological details. We have taken the liberty to illustrate the reading/interpretation difficulties by means of an example drawn from a text written at the end of the XIXth century that we have translated into Romanian, namely the monographic study entitled *Material k istorii Vostochnogo voprosa v 1808-1813 gg.*, devised by V.A.Ulianitki. The work is written in French, but it includes some excerpts written in old Russian.

“Les plénipotentiaires Russes ont répondu que l'article présenté, quoique formé de plusieurs paragraphes, ne présente cependant rien qui ne soit conforme à tout ce qui a été précédemment stipulé et au but que les deux Puissances ont eu constamment en vue, - celui d'assurer le repos, la tranquillité et la prospérité de ces pays; que le paragraphe relatif au

choix des hospodars ne s'écarte pas non plus de ce but, ce dont il sera aisé de se convaincre, lorsqu'il aura été connu dans toute sa teneur, que de même que la Cour Impériale de Russie veut éviter tout sujet de contestation et de mésintelligence dans ses nouvelles relations d'amitié avec l'empire Ottoman, de même la S. Porte doit avoir aussi la même intention; que dès lors elle doit vouloir tout ce qui peut faire atteindre ce but, et qu'en conséquence elle ne saurait considérer comme attentatoire à sa dignité, à l'exercice de sa souveraineté, le paragraphe relatif au choix à l'avenir des hospodars; que les plénipotentiaires Ottomans ne sauraient voir pour la Cour Impériale de Russie d'autre avantage dans chacune de ces stipulations et dans celle relative au choix des hospodars que celui que la S. Porte retirera elle-même, c. à. d. un moyen de plus d'assurer la bonne harmonie.

Les plénipotentiaires Ottomans ont répliqué que le bonheur d'un peuple ne saurait être assuré lorsque la souveraineté sur une contrée n'est pas entière et qu'elle est pour ainsi dire partagée” (Miclau, 1983).

Here is the translation done by T.Ceban: *„Plenipotențiarul rusi au răspuns, că articolul prezentat conține mai multe paragrafe, dar nu prezintă totuși nimic deosebit conform articolului care a fost stipulat anterior, având ca scop punctul de vedere ale celor două puteri: asigurarea liniștii, odihnii și bunăstarea celor două țări. Nici paragraful referitor la alegerea domnitorilor nu se îndepărtează de acest scop, de care va fi ușor să te convingi, deoarece conținutul lui a fost în întregime cunoscut. Așa cum Curtea Imperială a Rusiei dorește evitarea oricărui subiect de contestare și de dezacord în noile sale relații de prietenie cu Imperiul Otoman, la fel și Poarta trebuie să aibă aceeași intenție. Din acest moment, Poarta trebuie să vrea ca acest scop să fie atins și, în consecință ea nu va fi considerată drept putere care atentează la demnitatea și la exercițiul suveranității sale, la paragraful, care se referă la viitorul domnitorilor săi. Plenipotențiarul Otoman n-ar putea să vadă pentru Curtea Imperială a Rusiei în fiecare din aceste stipulări și în cea referitoare la alegerea domnitorilor alte avantaje, decât cel pe care Poarta însăși l-ar retrage, adică un mijloc în plus în asigurarea bunei înțelegeri.*

Plenipotențiarul Otoman au replicat, spunând, că fericirea unui popor nu va fi asigurată, dacă suveranitatea unei regiuni nu este deplină, altfel spus ea este împărțită.”

As far as literary texts are concerned, the translator has to re-create the emotive function

all by him/herself, in other words he/she has to re-live the author's emotional state, especially if the author is a poet such as V.Voiculescu in *Sonnet 52*:

Te-ncununam cu gânduri de slavă și mistere,
Ca într-o liturghie slujită-mpătimirii,
Cerșeam extaz cu aripi de flăcări în eter,
S-ajungem ipostaza de spaimă a iubirii.

In this stanza, the poet lives his love at a metaphysical level. The translator needs to capture this hypostasis; furthermore, in order to achieve a successful translation, he has to add his own affections.

The translation provided by P.Miclău attempts to reproduce the affective tension of the original poem, by paying attention to the adjustment of the translating means to the versification rules:

Comme dans la messe dite pour la passion,
Te couronnaient pensées de gloire et de mystère,
Pour cette hypothèse de l'amour qui morfond
Je mendiais l'extase des flammes dans l'éther
... (Apollinaire, 1965)

The synonymic register is essentially preserved as in the original version, with a few deviations imposed by prosody.

After having described the six language functions, we are going to round off our study of the basic language factors with a more thorough analysis of synonymy, with respect to the poetic function.

R. Jakobson calls into question what is, from an empirical point of view, the linguistic criterion of the poetic function, and the distinctive, key feature of poetry. In order to be able to give an appropriate answer to these questions, it is necessary to review the two main axes that come into play during communication. These axes are *selection* and *combination*. For instance, if the word *enfant* (*child*) represents the subject of communication, the speaker is likely to choose a word out of a series of words more or less similar: *gamin* (*kid*), *gosse* (*tyke*), *enfant* (*child*), *jeune homme* (*youngster*, *lad*) etc., - all these terms being somehow equivalent. Then, the speaker is going to choose one of the verbs that are related from a semantic point of view, in order to comment on the subject: (il) *dort* (*sleep*), *sommeille* (*slumber*),

s'assoupit (*snooze*), *somnole* (*drowse*), etc. Thus, the two words that are chosen can be combined in the communication chain.

The selection can be realized in accordance with the principles of equivalence, analogy or difference, synonymy or antinomy, whereas the combination relies on contiguity principles.

In order to further illustrate the impact of the poetic function upon the issues related to synonymy in the translation process, we have chosen a well-known poem written by Apollinaire, which seems to us most adequate for our topic of discussion - namely the poem entitled *Les colchiques* and its Romanian version, by Mihai Beniuc, published in the 1963 collection *Cele mai frumoase poezii (Brândușele)*.

The study of synonymy offers the best illustration of what R. Jakobson designates as the projection of the paradigmatic axis upon the syntagmatic axis. Each and every synonymic series makes up a lexical paradigm which is made available for the poet. The latter selects out of this paradigm the element that best suits his message.

Here is the text of the poem where we have underlined the words for which we have retrieved the synonymic series as they are found in the dictionaries:

Les colchiques

Le pré est véneux mais joli en automne
Les vaches y paissant lentement s'empoisonnent
Le colchique couleur de cerne et de lilas
Y fleurit tes yeux sont comme cette fleur-là
Voilàtes comme leur cerne et comme cet automne
Et ma vie pour tes yeux lentement s'empoisonne
Les enfants de l'école viennent avec fracas
Vêtus de hoquetons et jouant de l'harmonica
Ils cueillent les colchiques qui sont comme des mères.
Filles de leurs filles et sont couleur de tes paupières
Qui battent comme les fleurs battent au vent dément
Le gardien du troupeau chante tout doucement
Tandis que lentes et meuglant les vaches abandonnent
Pour toujours ce grand pré mal fleuri par l'automne (Tutescu, 1979)

This poem represents a particular case with regard to the projection of the paradigmatic axis of synonyms upon the syntagmatic axis of the poem. In the first stanza one can identify explicitly words closely related from a semantic point of view: *cerne* (*shadow*), *lilas* (*lilac*), *violâtre* (*violet*). These words make up a paradigm of synonyms that is deployed throughout the syntagmatic axis of the poem.

Such cases are mentioned especially by the researchers that deal with poetic isotopy (Bailly, 1947). The case where the paradigmatic axis of synonyms is deployed upon the syntagmatic axis is less frequent.

Further on, we have selected other synonymic series in order to highlight the wide range of selection possibilities out of which the poet on the point of writing a poem may choose.

These synonymic series can be grouped according to the criteria for structuring the poem – first, we can identify the actant-subjects *enfants*, *troupeaux* which give rise to the following synonymic series:

Enfant: *nouveau-né* (*newborn*); *premier* (*ou dernier*)-*né* (*first/last-born*); *poupon* (*babe-in-arms*); *poupard*; *v. bébé*; *baby* (*angl.*); *marmot* (*kid*); *petit* (*little one*); *mioche* (*brat*); *moutard* (*pop.*) (*kid*); *bambin*; *bambino* (*pop.*) (*little child*); *poussin* (*fam.*) (*chick*).

Troupeau: *groupe* (*group*); *reunion* (*assembly*); *multitude* (*multitude*); *people* (*people, gens*).

The poet deliberately chooses the “neutral” terms out of these synonymic series, in order to express an apparently simple poetic level.

As for the characterization of the meadow (*pré*), our choice is the synonymic series of *véneux* (*poisonous*) and *joli* (*nice*):

Véneux: *véneux* (*venomous*); *vireux* (*virous*); *empoisonné* (*poisoned*).

Joli: *beau* (*beautiful*); *belot* (*anc.*) (*beauteous*); *gracieux* (*graceful*); *giron* (*pop*) (*well-formed*); *désirable* (*desirable*); *délicat* (*delicate*); *charmant* (*charming*); *ravissant* (*delightful*); *coquet* (*pretty*); *harmonieux* (*harmonious*); *intéressant* (*interesting*).

If we analyze for instance the case of the synonymic series of *joli*, which comprises, according to the *Dictionary of synonyms*

(*Dictionnaire des synonymes*) about a dozen lexemes, the poet’s choice is the term *joli*, which helps pointing out to the familiar tone of the poem. The poet may well have chosen a few words out of the synonymic series – say *beau*, *charmant*, *intéressant*. Substituting these terms one for the other results in changes in the tone of the poem; nevertheless the invariant part of the sentence remains essentially the same.

As far as the action expressed by *s’empoisonner* (*to poison oneself*) is concerned, we have chosen the very verb *s’empoisonner* and the adverb *lentement* (*slowly*), related to the adjective *lent* (*slow*):

(S)’empoisonner: *intoxiquer* (*to poison*); *infecter* (*to contaminate, to infect*); *envenimer* (*to fester*) (*aussi au fig.*); *fig.: empuantir; empester* (*to stink out*); *incommoder* (*to bother*); *altérer* (*to spoil*); *gâter* (*to change for the worse*); *ennuyer* (*pop.*) (*to annoy*); *importuner* (*to bother*); *embêter; emmerder* (*pop.*) (*to bug*).

Lent-lentement: *sans rapidité* (*speedless*); *sans vivacité* (*liveless*); *sans promptitude*; *traînant* (*drawling*); *traînard* (*sluggish*); *lambin* (*slow*); *pas pressé* (*without a hurry*); *tranquille* (*still*); *long* (*à*); *pesant* (*heavy*); *tardif* (*late*); *posé* (*calm*); *lourdaud* (*oafish*); *pataud* (*lumbering*); *apathique* (*apathetic*); *mou* (*soft*); *flâneur* (*idle*); *endormi* (*sluggish*); *engourdi* (*numb*); *paresseux* (*lazy*); *nonchalant* (*casual*); *alangu* (*languid*).

We have considered the adverb and the related adjective in order to highlight the extent of the two synonymic series that comprise a total of 23 synonyms in the widest sense of the term. The poet chooses the simplest solution – the term *lentement* (*slowly*), which occurs rather frequently in his poems.

Finally, in order to express the dynamic intrusion of the children in this apparently peaceful scene, we are going to examine the synonymic series of *fracas* (*clatter*) and *dément* (*crazy*):

Fracas: *bruit* (*noise*); *son* (*sound*); *boucom* (*pop.*) (*crash*); *boussin* (*pop.*) (*rattle*); *pétard* (*pop.*) (*petard*); *chambard* (*pop.*) (*noise*).

Dément: *v. fou* (*mad*); *loufoque* (*id.*) (*zany*); *maboul* (*id.*) (*loony*); *marteau* (*id.*) (*nuts*); *piqué* (*id.*) (*groggy*); *sonné* (*id.*) (*cracked*); *tapé* (*kooky*);

échappé des petites-maisons (anc.) (*insane*); *échappé de Charenton* (*demented*); *frappé* (fam.) (*unstable*); *excentrique* (*eccentric*); *extravagant* (*wild*); *qui a perdu l'esprit (ou la raison ou la boule* (pop.) (*out of one's mind*); *idiot* (*idiot*); *crétin* (*moron*); *bizarre* (*strange*); *zinzin* (pop.) (*cracked*); *camé* (arg.) (*junkie*); *cinoque* (arg.) (*crazy*); *aliéné* (*lunatic*); *insensé* (*insane*); *irresponsable* (*irresponsible*); *forcené* (*frenzied*); *halluciné* (*lunatic*); *schizophrène* (*schizophrenic*); *paranoïaque* (*paranoiac*); *inconscient* (*reckless*); *monomane* (*monomaniac*); *possédé* (*possessed*); *déséquilibré* (*unbalanced*); *détraqué* (fam.) (*unhinged*); *timbré* (fam.) (*nuts*); *braque et branque* (rég.); *toqué* (fam.) (*loopy*); *furieux* (*mad*); *enfermé* (*locked up*); *interné* (*deranged*); *névrosé* (*neurotic*); *obsédé* (*obsessed*); *anormal* (*abnormal*); *désaxé* (*deranged*); *cinglé* (pop.) (*delirious*); *cintré* (pop.) (*waisted*); *dingue et dingo* (pop.) (*bananas*); *fada* (rég.) (*cracked*); *fondou* (pop.) (*distracted*); *louf et louftingue* (id.) (*cuckoo*).

The very wide synonymic series of *dément* is quite impressing – in this case the *Dictionary of synonyms* (*Dictionnaire de synonymes*) assembles common terms as well as medical specialized terms. Once again, the poet's option is the simple term *dément*, which acquires strong valences in association with the noun *vent* (*wind*) – *vent dement* (*crazy wind*).

In the translation process, the poetic function is particularly complex in that it has to account simultaneously for the paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes of the original version, as well as for the target-language version. Our choice is precisely M. Beniuc's translation since this version takes shape out of the translator's conscious attitude oriented toward making good use of the synonymic series available in the Romanian idiolect (a slightly dialectal version of the Romanian language).

Here is the full text of the poem:

Brândușile

E-*nveninată* lunca în toamnă, dar frumoasă,
Păscând în ea *cireada încet se-nveninează*.

Brândușa ca un cearcăn ori ca un liliac
Înfloare-n ea, brândușa-i ca ochii tăi ce-mi plac,
Ca cearcănele tale e vânătă, frumoasă,

Și viața-mi după ochii-ți *încet se-nveninează*.
Vin *pruncii* de la școală cu mare *tevatură*
În uniforme groase și hăulind din gură
Culeg brânduși ce-arată ca niște mame-
aproape,
Cu fiici, iar la culoare-s ca dulcile-ți pleoape,
Ce bat cum bate floare-n *întărâtatul* vânt.
Păstorul ciurdei merge încetinel cântând.
Pe când mugind alene trec vacile spre casă,
Lăsând de-a pururi lunca cu floare veninoasă
(Apollinaire, 1965);

In our opinion, the translator, especially if he is a poet himself, does not commit himself to a thorough analysis of the synonymic series in the source and target languages, but rather relies on his instinct when choosing particular words out of the wide range available in his subconscious.

However, we have found it useful to provide the whole synonymic series in the *Dictionary of synonyms* (Bailly, 1947) in order to show the wide range of synonyms that are available to the translator who takes a comprehensive approach. For, irrespective of the skills and talent of the translator, he sometimes has to make recourse to various dictionaries that deploy more or less complete synonymic series.

In what follows, we are going to present the first synonymic couple which corresponds to *enfant* (*child*) – *troupeau* (*herd*):

Prunc: *puradel*; *odraslă*; *progenitură*; *plod*; *pui*; *vlăstar*; *zgâmboi*.

Cireadă: *turmă*; (rar) *cârd*; (pop.) *ciurdă*.

The translation solutions adopted by M. Beniuc show precisely the valorisation of the poet's idiolect: the term *pruncii* (instead of *copiii*), occurs most frequently in Transylvania. The same goes for the other synonymic series, where the translator avoids using the general term *turmă* and uses instead the Transylvanian idiom *ciurdă*; moreover, he employs the word *cireadă* for *les vaches*.

The other couple – *véneux* – *joli* does not give rise to particular problems in translation, except maybe for M. Beniuc's recourse to the inchoative form.

Finally, we will confine our analysis to the last couple: *fracas - dément*, which are translated into the Romanian version as *tevatură* and *întărâtatul*:

Tevatură: *hărmălaie; balamuc; gălăgie; huiet; larmă; scandal; tămbălău; tărăboi; tumult; vacarm; vuiet; zarvă; zgomot; tapaj (livr.); tam-tam (fam.); țigănie (fig.).*

Întărâtatul: *asmuțit; stârnit; instigat; ațâțat; incitat; provocat; furios; îndârjit; înfuriat; înverșunat; mâniat; pornit; năbădăios (pop.); oțărât; burzuluit (fam.); zborșit; turbat (fig.); violent.*

In the case of the term *tevatură* the translation solution is also driven by the necessity to make it rhyme with *hăulind din gură*; nevertheless, it seems to us that the two syntagmatic solutions bear too many connotations in Romanian: moreover, the translator is mistaken in dropping out the object *harmonica* in translation.

In what concerns the second synonymic series (*întărâtatul*), we consider that the translation solution is adequate from a stylistic point of view. In fact, the poet shows once again his preference for the inchoative aspect, by using the term *întărâtat*. However, this solution moves away from Apollinaire's original version, the latter employing a rather medical connotation (*vent dément*).

Our analysis is illustrative for the complexity of the poetic function in the translation process, in that it highlights certain significant details related to the projection of the paradigmatic axis upon the syntagmatic axis.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that the translation process of the communication functions does not involve major difficulties. Sometimes, the translator seeks to "neutralize" the translation difficulties by making recourse to transposition, modulation, equivalence, adaptation, or even by suppressing an expression that has no equivalent in the target language.

In the case of the translation of poetic works, the translator's best approach is to relive the original emotions of the author, to which he adds his own affectivity, making sure that he obeys the constraints of versification.

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