

Language Evolution and Re-translations

Elona Limaj, Ph.d. cand

Department of English Language Albanian University

Abstract:

Language transformations in the course of the years may dictate the necessity of retranslations. Given the rapid change of languages, it is high time to consider retranslation of world literature masterpieces. As languages evolve, translations become dated, which explains why translations are «re-translated» so that they are updated and enriched linguistically. The translation gets old, whereas the original remains the unchanged. Translation needs to be contemporaneous in order to keep pace with the language level of the recipients of any generation. Retranslations occur mainly because of the constant development of the target language. The Albanian language has changed. It has become more open to words describing new phenomena that were missing while trying to transmit feelings, situations or events coming across in the works of greatest authors. This work will focus on an analysis of transformation of language norms, changes in orthographic rules, changes of political systems, which consist of main reasons that make the retranslation of the masterpieces a necessity. However, there are numerous debates surrounding the re-translation of literary classics. Nevertheless, the re-translation issue is complex and needs to be reviewed in several aspects.

Keywords: *language evaluation, language transformation, re-translation, literary classics*

Introduction

Translation is a “fight” between source language and target language, where at the end the target language must unveil the same values as the source language. Language transformations in the course of the years may dictate the necessity of retranslations. Given the rapid change of languages, it is high time to consider retranslation of world literature masterpieces. It is widely known as an universal rule : Translations get old, whereas the original remains the same. Translation faces the co-timing phenomenon of linguistic level for the recipient of every generation. (Xhelili 2008 : 65)

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linguistically. The translation gets old, whereas the original remains the unchanged. Translations need to be contemporaneous in order to keep pace with the language level of the recipients of any generation. Retranslations occur mainly because of the constant development of the target language. (Newmark 1988 : 13) The Albanian language has changed. It has become more open to words describing new phenomena that were missing while trying to transmit feelings, situations or events coming across in the works of greatest authors. This work will focus on an analysis of transformation of language norms, changes in orthographic rules, ideology and changes of political systems, which consist of main reasons that make the retranslation of the masterpieces a necessity. To translate the words or the spirit of a language? To translate the linguistic forms, lexical sign or the tradition codified within it? Can the tradition of someone read your tradition, as someone's language reads your language? This are the questions.

But, should we translate the translated? This is the nowadays question.

Re-translation is a practice which is yet to be fully studied but which is becoming more important in literary circles, notably in the translation of old literary texts. As languages evolve, translations become dated, which explains why translations are « re-translated » so that they are updated and enriched linguistically. However, there are numerous debates surrounding the re-translation of literary classics to update them to current vernacular. The definition of translation underlines the transmission to the reader of a text in a certain language with the linguistic means of another language (Ymeri 2015 : 40), but as long as linguistic means of the language change, we might find it necessary to re-translate these masterpieces.

The standard language of the 1970s has been subject of considerable challenges regarding the linguistic forms, not to mention the fact that some translations have been realized before that period. This is a good reason leading to the necessity of re-translation and it is high time for re-translation of some works. (Tupja 2007: 59)

Great classical writers or poets, even though translated into Albanian by our writers and poets do not have the spirit and expression of nowadays level of Albanian literature language, because their translation product is certainly affected by the language development of the respective translation period. In this respect, the translations of Shakespeare, Poe, Cervantes have been translated with the potential means of Albanian language of '20 – '30- ies of XX-th century.

There are many pros and cons to retranslation. This work is an effort to provide another opinion in this respect. The analysis is focused on two main points : language norms and influence of political regime.

Language Norms

Most of the translations have been completed before the Albanian Orthography Congress. These works do not meet the standards defined in the Congress. A big number of world masterpieces have been translated into Albanian from Fan Noli, who has used an informal Albanian language to bring these works closer to common people. An example of this fact is the translation of Don Quixote into Albanian, where he has even translated the names of the characters into Albanian real people. The first volume of this book is translated by Noli, whereas the second by another prominent Albanian translator Petro Zheji. Regarding types of translation, we can mention the free translation of Noli, using re-creation, Turkish words and Southern Albanian dialect. Whereas, Robert Shvarc used to put his body and soul into his translations, while using re-creation type of translation. The line of the poem “Raven” by Poe :

Once upon a midnight dreary , while I pondered wean and weary,

Has several versions in Albanian language:

“Një mesnatë të bezdisur tek kndonja i zalisur”

“Një mesnatë të zymtuar, mëndjevlarë, shpirtlënduar

“Një mesnatë të trishtuar, po mendoja i drobitur, i dërmuar.

Some translations include Albanian dialect words which are not familiar to everyone and a standard language is necessary for making it clear to everyone.

The poetry of Charles Baudelaire “A une passante” translated by Noli in Albanian sounds as following :

Ja shkrepni dhe u err. Moj flutur **e farosur**

Qe me veshtrimin tent me bere **flag e furre**

S’te shoh me vale vec ne jeten **e pasosur**?

Meanwhile the famous saying “Të rroç a të mos rroç, kjo është çështja” translated with the help of the category of participle which in Albanian has been eliminated and creates an ontological clash in meaning related to the verbs “to be/ to live”, accompanied with a southern dialect form.

Political regime

State-owned publishing houses that used to censor several works, due to ideology of the communist regime. Some works have been translated into Albanian in their complete form. Due to ideological views, the Tess of Débervilles has been shortened. There are 20 pages missing, removed due to some religious point of views.

Nevertheless, translations in Kosovo have marked a more advanced period than translations in Albania, not from the point of view of quality of translation or language, but due to selection of authors. In the '70-ies or '80-ies, when Albania was under the ideological selection of world classics, in Prishtine were translated some authors that in Albania came much later, such as Kafka, Proust, Wild, Kamy, Sartre, Beckett e Ionesco; Borghese, Sabatto, Babel, Bell, Hesse, Grass or Bulgakov.

But, when it comes to re-translation of classics, we need to have brilliant translators, who can be at least compared to the translators who enabled us to feel the taste of the world masterpieces. Nevertheless, we do not have any guarantee that the second translation would be the best. (Kokona 2003: 7)

Good literary works are written in powerful language and are psychologically penetrating. Different translators, no matter the time or historical periods, first as readers of the original work, may have different interpretations of the same work. Better or worse.

Nevertheless, we have come across several retranslations of one novel into the Albanian language, so far, there are three translations of Ana Karenina of Tolstoy. Each of them characterized by language means used in the period they were translated and appreciated by their readers.

Or the dramatic loss of the thrilling lines of Poe in the Raven
*And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me- filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;*

*Era frynte qe perjashta,
Rrihte perdet e mendafshta
Dhe me ngjethte dhe me derthte
Tmerre qe s'i ndjeva kurre.*

Another issue is the translation of these works from a second language, not the original. The translator must drink spring water, not the water coming from a secondary resource. The necessity of re-translation of the world literature masterpieces becomes more obvious when this classical culture of new and old times needs to have a more vivid communication with the

source culture. Re-translation is like re-playing a classical symphony from an orchestra with new instruments. It seems like they make it more vital and becomes popular even among young people. Different types of readers are identified with the translators that sound good to them. This is suitable also for original. This process brings the original closer to contemporary standards, which may also justify the loss of first translation of the classical translation. (Jacobson 1959 : 134)

According to translator Edmond Tupja, it is necessary to be audacious. (Tupja 2007 : 59)

“Regarding re-translation of world classics, I believe - including the thesis of some other important translators - that a work of literature must be re-translated every 15 years, because first of all we experience a change in the taste of people, as well as a change of the way of writing and expression”, he says. However, there are numerous debates surrounding the re-translation of literary classics. Nevertheless, the re-translation issue is complex and needs to be reviewed in several aspects.

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