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## TRANSLATING POETIC DISCOURSE

## Introduction

In translating, a new act of communication is being created out of previously existing one; therefore, translators act under the pressure of their own social conditions while at the same time they try to negotiate meaning between the producer of the source-language text (ST) and the reader of the target-language text (TT), both of whom exist within their own different social frameworks. This is a complex process, and it takes us beyond translation itself towards the whole relationship between language activity and the social context in which it takes place. Consequently, translation carries with it some debatable issues, the first one being *literal versus free* controversy. Nida [11] reformulated this problem in terms of types of equivalence appropriate to particular circumstances and distinguished *formal equivalence* (closest possible match of form and content between ST and TT) and *dynamic equivalence* (principle of equivalence of effect on reader of TT) as basic orientations.

One more debatable issue is the primacy of *content over form* and vice versa. The ideal would be to translate both form and content, but this is hardly possible [7]. Next, in translating the concept of intentionality is emphasized — the translator has to grasp the intentions of the writer and transfer them into the target language text. Translation is a matter of choice, but it has to be motivated: omissions, additions and alterations may be justified only in relation to intended meaning. There is no satisfactory resolution as far as the translation of a poetic discourse is concerned, i.e. whether it is translatable from one language into another [5]. In Jakobson's opinion, "...poetry by definition is untranslatable. Only a creative transposition is possible..." ([9]: 151). Or, to quote Bonnefoy, "The answer to the question, 'Can one translate a poem?' is of course no" ([4]: 186). "What we gain <...> is the poetry of other languages" ([4]: 188). Consequently, we get different discourses. Therefore, all the above mentioned disputable problems in the translation theory are closely related to the issues of text / discourse coherence and cohesion.

Any text, created by a writer, can be characterized as possessing structural and semantic wholeness, unity, being in a way subjective because it expresses the author's beliefs, values, intentions. To achieve this, the author chooses such means from the formal language code which serve him best. Each language is

specific and peculiar; each language possesses unique structures and vocabulary, which cannot be encountered in any other language. Nabokov ([10]: 73–74), for example, analyzing the problems of translating *Onegin* in English, points out to six characteristics of language and prosody in Russian poetry. According to some scholars [7], the translator's task is to transfer the author's intentionality, preserve, as much as possible, his style having at his disposal a different formal linguistic code which may be lacking certain structures and lexical expressions present in ST. Consequently, the translator has to preserve the deep structure of a text, i.e. its coherence, allowing for some variations on its surface level, which may include certain inadequacies in terms of cohesive devices and which manifest themselves most clearly through omissions, additions and alterations [7]. However, Blum-Kulka [3] claims that there are shifts not only of cohesion but also of coherence in translation. Speaking about the first type of shifts, he, of course, refers to the realization of various types of cohesive devices in SL and TL. Shifts of coherence, according to the author, are reader-focused and text-focused, but, from our point of view, no clear-cut line is drawn between these two types of shifts. They both mainly deal with differences in the cultural assumptions of the information receivers, i.e. what information they infer from a certain text. However, interlocutors belonging to the same culture and speaking the same language may interpret the same discourse (speech act or speech event) differently due to their beliefs, values, social knowledge, etc. Widdowson ([13]: 8) claims that "discourse... is the pragmatic process of meaning negotiation. Text is its product". Consequently, any piece of writing, addressed to the audience is discourse which can be negotiated, interpreted and which evokes different reactions from its receivers [1; 2].

### Material and Methods

The article aims, on the basis of the above presented assumptions, to compare the translations of A. Baranauskas' *Anykščių Šilelis* into English and Russian. This comparison does not aim to reveal literary merits or drawbacks of the translations. *Anykščių Šilelis* and its translations are viewed as discourses which are supposed to have identical deep structure, surface realization of which takes different linguistic forms because of certain structural differences of the Lithuanian, English and Russian languages in the first place. Peculiarities of lexical systems, differences in cultural values and beliefs, historical background also play a significant role in the process of translation. Vabalienė ([12]: 178), reviewing P. Tempest's translation of *Anykščių Šilelis* into English (the same could be applied to its translation into Russian by Н. Тихонов) writes:

*It is very complicated to translate Anykščių Šilelis into any language. This literary work requires thorough preparation on the part of the translator. He has to be well aware of Lithuania's folklore and history, of the flora and fauna of its forests, even of the dialect of Anykščiai region.*

Further, Vabalienė's claim that P. Tempest looks for functional equivalence in ST and TT allows to presume the identity of the deep structure of ST and TT despite certain inadequacies and variations on the surface level. In the paper, these variations are analyzed taking into consideration **additions, omissions and alterations**, which, according to Hatim & Mason ([7]; 12), "may indeed be justified but only in relation to intended meaning".

As translation is a process that deals with discourses, it needs to be studied within the framework of discourse analysis and content analysis approach. In addition, we deal with three discourses (one in Lithuanian, the other in English and the third one in Russian); therefore, certain aspects of contrastive analysis are also applied [8].

### Results and Discussion

**Additions.** The above mentioned variations on the surface level of TTs, i.e. additions or omissions of lexical items or structural units, hardly appear in a 'pure' form. Very often additions are combined with omissions because newly introduced lexical items or syntactic structures compensate for the omitted ones, for what cannot be translated verbatim from the original. Consequently, we can speak only about the degree of what is being omitted or added:

*Ieva, gluosna ir blendis, grūšia, obelėlė;  
Savo seserį skundžia liekna sedūlėlė.  
Vinkšnos, šaltėkšniai, liepos ir nesuskaityti  
Kitokių medžių skyriai tarp jų išsklaistyti.*

*Here pear and apple show munificence.  
The cornel rues her sister's violence.  
Here buckthorn grows, birdcherry, linden, elm  
And many trees dwell in this forest realm...*

*Вот ива, верба вот, и яблони, и груша,  
Черемуха стоит, — шум их листья послушай.  
И шум деревьев тех ты выслушай в молчаньи:  
В обиде на сестру то себулы стенанья.  
Средь вязов, и крушин, и лип — несчетный с нами  
Других деревьев стан — с другими именами.*

The Lithuanian text is developed on the basis of the participant-line<sup>1</sup>, expressed through the cohesive chain which is realized mainly by hyponymic repetition and which ends by hyperonym *trees*. The English translation employs parallelism of structures, as the TT is developed both through the participant-line and the event-line; therefore, the translator needs more lexical items naming actions — *show, grow*. The participant-line cohesive chain becomes shorter in the TT; as a result, new additional semantic connotations appear concerning *sedūlėlė* — in the English variant the phrase *her sister's violence* crop up in the first place which is mainly employed for rhythmic purposes.

The Russian variant presents still another picture, as the additions conspicuously prevail over omissions. Here, on the one hand, text structuring seems to follow the pattern of the ST, i.e. it is based on the participant-line, and the translator also concentrates on the cohesive chain consisting of hyponymic and hyperonymic lexical repetitions. On the other hand, the translator introduces additional semantic nuances, absent in the ST: he addresses the reader employing the parallelism of structures and lexical repetition: *шум их листья послушай, И шум деревьев тех ты выслушай в молчаньи*. Even the text itself is longer — instead of four lines in the original and in the English version, the Russian translation of this passage takes up six lines.

The addition *in June* in the following extract

*Skujom, šakelėm ir šiškam nuklotą  
Kerpiną saulė nenaudingą plotą...  
With needle, cone and twig the earth is strewn-  
A barren waste the sun bakes hard in June...*

could also be claimed to be included to preserve the rhyme of the line. However, at the same time it modifies the interpretation of the text, for June can hardly be considered to be the hottest month in summer. Consequently, it is possible to speak about deviations from the author's intentions. The Russian variant, in this case, seems to be closer to the original:

*И солнце зло печет, вокруг пустырь покатый,  
Сухими ветками и шишками богатый.*

**Omissions** are most often noticeable in the cases where the author describes one or the other aspect of the forest with the help of folklore diminutives, flowery, picturesque verbs, epithets, metaphors, etc. Let us look at the following example:

<sup>1</sup> We adhere to Gleason's model of semologic structure (from [6]) which claims that texts are structured mainly on the basis of the Event-Line and the Participant-Line.

*Kur tik žiūrī, vis gražu: žalia, liekna, gryna!*  
*Kur tik uostai, vis miela: giria nosj trina!*  
*Kur tik klausai, vis linksma: šlama, užia, siaudžia!*  
*Kq tik jauti, vis ramu: širdj glosto, griaudžia!*

*All that surrounds you with such beaty glows!*  
*With every scent the forest woos your nose*  
*And lively sounds you hear in every part.*  
*You sense a deep calm soothing to the heart.*

In four lines Baranauskas presents the layout of the poem's lyrical sighs. The same layout is retained in the TT, but some modifications on the surface structure level are rather significant. The ST is structured on the basis of parallel constructions, and its „backbone“ is the event-line through which it is developed. Four senses are enumerated by verbal nominations: *žiūrī, uostai, klausai, jauti*. These are characterized by words of rather wide semantics: *gražu, miela, linksma, ramu*. The narrowing of meaning is achieved through stylistically marked lexemes *siaudžia, griaudžia*, metaphor *giria nosj trina*, the cohesive chain *žalia, liekna, gryna*. All these means are highly stylistically loaded. The same four senses are mentioned and characterized in the English version, but it is devoid of strict parallelism. In Lithuanian, the text is mainly developed through the event-line while in English the development goes through the event and the participant lines. This could be partly explained by the differences in the syntactic structure of both languages. In Lithuanian the implied participant *you, the reader* is expressed by zero nomination. The norms of the English grammar require an explicit expression of a subject which in this case coincides with the concept of the participant. Therefore the implicitness of the subject in the ST forced the translator to search for explicit means in translation, i.e. pronoun *you*. In each line it is placed in a different position thus violating the parallelism of the ST. Gone are synonymous expressions, picturesque verbs — they are replaced by more general nominations containing less stylistically connoted lexical items: *lively sounds, a deep calm soothing to the heart*, etc.

In this case the Russian translation resembles more the English one:

*Куда ни кинешь взгляд — зеленая завеса,  
 Понюхай — сразу нос щекочет ласка леса.  
 Где ни прислушайся — веселый шум услышишь,  
 Ты чувствуешь покой — весельем леса дышишь.*

We find the enumeration of the four senses here as well; however, the cohesive chains, realized by synonymous expressions, also did not find place in the Russian version.

The loss of folklore diminutives can be traced throughout the whole poem:

*Kur jūsu paukšėiai, paukšteliai, paukštytės...*  
*Where are your birds and nestlings to be found...*  
*Kur jūsu žvėrys, gyvuliai, žvėreliai?*  
*Kur žverių olos, laužai ir urveliai?*  
*Where are your living creatures large and small,*  
*The burrows and the lairs that housed them all?*

The participant-line undergoes certain modifications in the TT. The translator, unable to find adequate diminutival forms in English, resorts, for example, to descriptive nominations *nestlings* or *living creatures large and small*. The Russian version in some cases retains the development of the original: *Где ваши птицы, пташки и пичужки*, while in other cases the translator omits diminutives and synonymous expressions (especially in the second line), *Где ваши звери, где лесные их дороги, / Где все их логова, и норы, и берлоги?*

It is also interesting to note that many proper names (place names) are omitted in the English translation, while in the Russian version they are preserved:

*Kas ten šnibžda? — Ė šnypsėja iš kelmo piktoji.*  
*Egi srove teškėna upelė Šventoji.*  
*Who whispers? It's an adder you hear hiss*  
*Or it's the river laps her bank in bliss.*  
*Чей это шобный шип? — Гадюки шип зловецкий.*  
*Зеленою волтой Швянтоиш в берег плещет.*

As far as the place names go, *Šlavė* is replaced by *the river*, *Marčiupis pakalnės* by *the hillside*, and so on. The Russian version preserves these proper names: *вдоль Шлаве, склон Марчюписа*. The only proper name which is retained in the English translation is *Mickiewicz* (russ. — *Мицкевич*).

**Alterations.** Alterations usually concern either the change of linguistic means on the surface level or some shifts in semantics. In the first case these changes are closely connected with the above discussed examples of omissions or additions. As it was mentioned earlier, it is diffi-

cult to find a 'pure' case' of transformations. In the second case, when alterations affect the semantics of the text, they are mainly due to some historical or cultural aspects of that period. Let us look at the following example:

*Ir vasarą, ir žiemą kaip rūtis žaliuoja,  
Lietuo liemenį plaka, kaip mendrės siūruoja.  
Už pusvarščio nesmato — toksai tankumynas!  
In summer and in winter green as rue,  
Like reeds they grow, the close the distant view  
And all around you only trees are seen...*

In this extract the translator notably modifies the third line — a unit of length *pusvarstis* is replaced by other lexical and syntactic structures (*all around you*). As this unit of measure is closely connected with Lithuania's history (*pusvarstis* was a Russian unit of length in the 19th century), its replacement by other linguistic means eliminates from the translation rather important cultural/historical nuances of meaning. The Russian variant in this respect is closer to the original:

*И летом и зимой их зелены вершины,  
Ствол задевает ствол, качаясь как тростины.  
На полверсты вперед не видно в чаще мглистой...*

Similar situation could be observed in the following two lines:

*Ė tai vis dėl arielkos daugiausia išleidę:  
Visi buvę kaip žydų šeimyna pasleidę.  
Whatever money they received they drank  
And into ways of dissolution sank.*

First of all we see that in the TT the barbarism *arielka* disappears (it was widely used in Lithuania in the 19th century); to preserve the text's deep structure it is replaced by the verb *drank*. However, the translation of the second line distorts the author's intentions and in a way violates the deep structure of the text. In the original, Lithuanians are compared to Jews, and this comparison might carry with it different interpretations. One of the possible interpretation could be that some Jewish families were rich or became rich by selling alcohol to the Lithuanian peasants, who, in turn, became addicted to it and little by little lost their property and moral values. This way these historical social aspects disappear from the TT — only the very fact of impoverishment is stated. Let us look at the Russian version:

*А деньги бедняков в «горилке» утонули,  
Как слуги шинкарей, всё прогибли в разгуле.*

We would claim that it is closer to the original. In the first place *arielka* is translated by *горилка*, which is also treated as a barbarism (in the translation it is even presented in inverted commas); the second line also hints that Lithuanian peasants were manipulated by some people and lead into moral and material degradation. However, the Russian version also avoids the above mentioned comparison of Lithuanians to Jews.

### Conclusions

Translation, especially of a poetic text, is a complicated process. Many scholars believe that poetic discourse, which, in most cases, is highly culturally-bound, is untranslatable.

In the process of translating discourse, it is very important to preserve the coherence of the ST. Differences on the surface level (the choice of cohesive devices, etc.) are unavoidable.

The analysis of the Lithuanian poetic text and its translations to the English and Russian languages showed that both the translators, P. Tempest and Н. Тихонов, kept very close to the original's deep structure; however, the Russian variant is closer because of certain well-known historical (and at the same time cultural) connections.

Changes on the surface level of these three discourses manifest themselves most clearly in additions, omissions and alterations of formal linguistic means. Here, again, the Russian version overall tends to be closer to the original, as the Lithuanian and Russian languages possess more commonalities in the patterns of structural organization, the formation of diminutive forms, etc.

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### Translating Poetic Discourse

The paper aims to throw some light upon the differences in structuring texts in the process of translation. These differences are connected with certain variations on the surface level of TT (text cohesion), while it is assumed that the deep structure of ST (text coherence) has to be preserved in the process of translation. The Lithuanian poetic text and its translations into English and Russian were analyzed. The obtained data show that the translators allowed for certain modifications on the surface level of the discourse that manifest themselves most clearly in the omissions, additions and alterations.

**Key words:** translation, translator, cohesion, coherence, omissions, additions, alterations.