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INSIGHTS INTO LITERARY TRANSLATION AND ITS AESTHETIC EQUIVALENCE

(with special reference to Edgar A. Poe’s “Annabel Lee”)

The article outlines the theoretical and practical framework of literary translation as one of the complicated procedure of all times. The work focuses on the principles of translation equivalence, as well as it carries out a comparative research of Edgar Poe’s poetry “Annabel Lee” and its Armenian translation. The interpretation of meta-language in poetry entails consequences for its full evaluation and equivalent aesthetic translation.

Key words: literary translation, equivalence, comparative stylistics, aesthetics, Edgar Allan Poe, Annabel Lee, Armenian translation, poetry, interpretation.

Introduction

The present article is a special survey in the field of comparative translation studies, which gives a wide opportunity to reveal unique solutions of translation instances in target text and to single out its aesthetic values. It should be mentioned that literary translation is a complex mental process, which needs to minute interpretation of explicit and implicit textual peculiarities. Since the translator cannot reproduce comprehensively the whole polyphonic overtones of original, still there is a necessity of aesthetic reverberation of source text by using

his/her “sixth sense” and word interplay (Bassnett, 2018).

Immanuel Kant’s Critique of Judgment (2009[1790]) made a major impact on aestheticism. He states: “An aesthetic idea cannot become a cognition, because it is an intuition (of the imagination) for which an adequate concept can never be found” (p. 170). Moreover, the moral “symbol” of beauty, in its harmonizing effects on the mind, will accordingly cultivate “taste”.(Ryan, 2011).

Cicero outlined his approach to translation in De optimo genere oratorum (46 BCE/ 1960 CE), introducing his own translation of the speeches of the Attic orators Aeschines and Demosthenes:

And I did not translate them as an interpreter, but as an orator, keeping the same ideas and forms, or as one might say, the ‘figures’ of thought, but in language which conforms to our usage. And in so doing, I did not hold it necessary to render word for word, but I preserved the general style and force of the language. (Cicero 46 BCE/1960 CE: 364)

In general, the translation of poetry is a multifunctional procedure, which involves linguistic and extra-linguistic awareness, the possibility to interpret and perceive the entire gist of the content and the author’s intention, as well as to transpose the rhythmical peculiarities of the verse. Edgar Allan Poe’s poems has an exclusive stylistic, it is not only the pure utterance of versified tales, but also a unique piece of literature where the function of impact of language predominates. Consequently, for natural translation the translator should observe and analyze the vertical and horizontal context of the source text, penetrate into the author’s style and language thus revealing and reverberating it in the target text.

Based on the theorists’ (Coyle, Garside, Peck, 1990) assumption there is a special procedure for literary text interpretation and by applying this procedure the translator can be ready for the initial step of poetry translation.

EVALUATION AND SOLUTION

INTERPRETATION

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

The first step of the diagram is structural analysis of the text, in our case poetry, where the translator should focus on the rhythmical peculiarities, like prosodic features, types of repetitions, assimilations, assonance or consonance, etc. The second step is interpretation where the translator aims at revealing the linguistic and extra-linguistic factors. The third step is the evaluation, which presupposes a thorough evaluation of linguistic features in target language and their adequate reverberation.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The present research focuses on Edgar Allan Poe's poetry entitled *Annabel Lee* and its Armenian translation done by S. Mkrtchyan. The methodological approach of the study is multifaceted, as it comprises; 1. theoretical illustration of the art of translation; 2. Interpretation of the genre and epoch, as well as the author's intention; 3. Linguo-stylistic and linguo-poetic analysis of poem; 3. The comparative analysis of original and translation.

TRANSLATION THEORY AND CRITISISM

The issues of literary translation originated from the ancient times and remained on the agenda of the theorists. Undoubtedly, literary translation is a complex procedure, which presupposes a thorough analysis of style and language of the original, critical interpretation of the epoch, literary genre, the psychoanalytical investigation of author's world perception, etc.

In this connection a question may raise, how to reach equivalency in translation? In 1813 the German theologian and philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher wrote a highly influential treatise on translation entitled as "*On the different methods of translating*". The theorist underlined the following notion;

Either the translator leaves the writer alone as much as possible and moves the reader toward the writer, or he [sic] leaves the reader alone as much as possible and moves the writer toward the reader. (Schleiermacher, 1992:41-2).

The notion of equivalent translation has become important especially when the translators tackled upon the problem of translatability of the difficult parts of Bible; consequently the approaches of equivalence have become the quintessential subject of research for theorists. As P. Newmark (1988) stated a satisfactory translation is always possible, but a good translator is never satisfied with it. It can usually be improved. There is no such thing as a perfect, ideal or "correct" translation. The "sixth sense", which often comes into play during the final revision, tells the translator when to translate literally and also instinctively.

With the development of science and technology, the field of translation studies also enhanced its scope and interrelated with such disciplines as neurobiology, cognitive psychology, sociology, anthropology, etc. However, one cannot fail to observe that there is a constant interplay between the theory of translation and comparative (contrastive) linguistics, which aims at revealing the similarities and differences between the source language and the target language for equivalent transposition. In this connection Russian linguist Retsker pointed out:

Перевод немислим без прочной лингвистической основы. Такой основой должно быть сравнительное изучение языковых явлений и установление определенных соответствий между языком подлинника и языком перевода. Эти соответствия в области лексики, фразеологии, синтаксиса и стиля и

должны составлять лингвистическую основу теории перевода» [Рецкер, 1950: 156]

Translation is impossible without a solid linguistic background. By saying “background” one presupposes a comparative study of linguistic phenomena and the establishment of certain equivalence between the source language and the target language. The equivalence should be formed in the field of vocabulary, phraseology, syntax and style for establishing the linguistic basis of the theory of translation (Retsker, 1950:156).

In other words, the utmost importance of language comparison in the process of translation is to fix and reveal those units and elements, which will embody the air of equivalency in target text. The further development of comparative linguistics created preconditions for emerging a new approach in the field, i.e. comparative stylistics, which was founded by Swiss linguist Charles Bally. In his works, the scientist used the term “external stylistics” thus indicating the expansion of the scope of stylistic research beyond the framework of monolingual material. Bally compared the stylistic peculiarities of the German and French languages and came to the conclusion that the study of the stylistic overtones of one language through the prism another one allows obtaining the most reliable results in translation. For Bally, aesthetics is of paramount importance and the function of impact in language should be transmitted to the target reader. The accentuation of emotional utterance in the speech alongside with extra-linguistic factors, like the history, culture, religions, etc., created more naturalistic atmosphere in the literary artefact.

Dwelling upon further observations it is revealed that one of the most interesting aspects of translation theory is the problem of conveying various stylistic devices equivalently. The translator’s choice is dual: either to try to reverberate the stylistic device of the original, or, if this is not possible, to create his own stylistic means that has a similar emotional effect. This approach is called the principle of stylistic compensation. Referring to the equivalent illustration of stylistic devices or emotive overtones, Chukovsky (1919) noted that *not a metaphor should be conveyed by metaphor, simile by simile, but a smile – with a smile, a tear – with a tear, etc.*

Recently, however, researchers have come to recognize that literature can help us to understand emotion. Specifically, the study of literature may train our spontaneous emotional response and inference in everyday life; it may contribute to our self-conscious adjudication of moral and prudential aspects of emotional reasoning; and it may be part of our developing theoretical comprehension of emotion (Zunshine, 2015).

Hence, for the translator of a piece of verbal art the impressionistic perception of target reader should be a priority, where on the one hand should be the faithfulness the original, its flavour, spirit, local colour, on the other hand there should be the natural flow of a translation and the pleasure and delight of the reader. This means that the translator can have a certain amount of freedom of

action and come up with optimal natural solution.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Edgar Allan Poe is a poet of life with the air of mysteriousness and oblivion. His perceptions about poetry were not as similar as with the poets of the mid-nineteenth century, as he was not an advocate of long poems. He liked generating poetic pieces, which sustained different levels of connotations with the fullest dramatic and psychological justification. And undoubtedly he was a Romantic poet who uttered remarkable instance of stylistic devices difficult for equivalent transposition. Let's compare the English and Armenian versions of exquisite poem *Annabel Lee*:

It was many and many a year ago
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of Annabel Lee
Տարիներ առաջ այս երկնքի տակ
Կար երկիր անվանի.
Ապրում էր այնտեղ սիրունիկ մի աղջնակ,
Անունը՝ Անաբել Լի:

In this extract the quintessential figure is Annabel Lee – a maiden, who lived in the kingdom by the sea. The poetry has the air of mystery with vital attraction of stylistic devices, especially repetition. The incremental repetitions *In a kingdom by the sea/ By the name of Annabel Lee/ In this kingdom by the sea/ I and my Annabel Lee* created rhythmical smoothness aiming at immediate imaginative transportation of reader to the kingdom by the sea. However, in the Armenian translation repetitions are not preserved; instead the translator focused on the aesthetic rhythmical solutions of the elements by adding new overtones, like *երկնք, երկիր, սիրունիկ*. The addition of these units completed the entity of the verse line and made more charming.

The ability to express versified and laconic romantic stories makes Poe be an outstanding author and on closer inspection of his poetry the reader cannot but admire. Here is another extract:

And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.
She was a child and I was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea.

Աղջիկը չուներ ուրիշ երազանք
Ինձ սիրելուց ու ինձնից սիրվելուց բացի:
Երեխա էր նա, երեխա էի ես,
Այս ծովի ափին,

The aesthetic imagination of Edgar Allan Poe is beyond limits, which can be proved by one of his famous quotation, as *Poetry is the rhythmical creation of Beauty*. If we compare the English and Armenian extracts one can notice a perfect illustration of equivalency. The translator subtly reflected the form and the content and constructed the versification patterns to unveil the overt gist of the story. In the translation a poetic and fragile composition is introduced simply by shifting the positions of the pronouns *she* and *I* in Armenian retrospectively, like *She was a child and I was a child – երեխա էր **սու**, երեխա էի **ես**:*

Poe is rather a scientist, an artist and a psychologist. He perceives the human psychological manifestations with accuracy and aesthetics, which involved rhythmical beauty of works of art and its unique impressionistic response of the readers, thus creating the relation of the beautiful to the true and the good. In this connection in his seminal article *Aesthetics*, Croce elaborates on his perceptions of aesthetics.

If we examine a poem in order to determine what it is that makes us feel it to be a poem, we at once find two constant and necessary elements: a complex of images, and a feeling that animates them. . . . Moreover, these two elements may appear as two in a first abstract analysis. But they cannot be regarded as two distinct threads, however intertwined; for, in effect, the feeling is altogether converted into images, into this complex of images, and thus a feeling that is contemplated and therefore resolved and transcended. Hence poetry must be called neither feeling, nor image, nor yet the sum of the two, but ‘contemplation of feeling’ or ‘lyrical intuition’ [which is the same thing] ‘pure intuition– pure, that is, of all historical and critical reference to the reality or unreality of the images of which it is woven, and apprehending the pure throb of life in its ideality (Croce, 1964).

Poe created his literary art with the intertwinement of spiritual feelings and consciousness, however his works have the air of tragedy and sorrow. The plot of the poem *Annabel Lee* revolves around dichotomy of life and death, and Poe’s aim was to discover what was beyond the life. He roved around the unknown passages of life and human soul and unfolded its hidden essence.

Poe systematically entertained the melodious play of stylistic means and emotive overtones for creating aesthetic versification. Every stanza is calculated with great accuracy and taste and each linguistic element is delivered efficiently. Let’s interpret the following extracts.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
 In this kingdom by the sea,
 A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
 My beautiful Annabel Lee;
 So that her highborn kinsmen came
 And bore her away from me,
 To shut her up in a sepulchre
 In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in Heaven,
Went envying her and me—
Yes!—that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we—
Of many far wiser than we—
And neither the angels in Heaven above
Nor the demons down under the sea
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
In her sepulchre there by the sea—
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

Սակայն սերը մեր սիրուց էլ էր վես –
Ես ու իմ Անաբել Լին.
Սերովբեներն անգամ տենչում էին մեզ,
Տենչում մեր հոգին:
Հենց այդ պատճառով աղետ եղավ մեծ
Այս ծովի ափին,
Երկնից ահավոր մի քամի փչեց,
Սառեց իմ Անաբել Լին:
Մերձավորները եկան ծանրումեծ,
Նրան փակեցին
Մի դագաղի մեջ, ու հավենտ քնեց
Իմ անսման Անաբել Լին:
Սակայն սերը մեր սիրուց էլ էր խոր,
Բոլոր մեծերից,
Իմաստուններից.
Անգամ դրախտի հրեշտակները բոլոր,
Չարքերը ծովի հատակից,

Ախ, չեն բաժանի հոգիս ոչ մի օր
 Իմ Անաբելից:
 Լուսինն ինձ շողով երազ է բերում,
 Իմ սիրուն Անաբել Լի.
 Աստղերն ինձ քո վառ աչքերն են բերում,
 Աննման Անաբել Լի:
 Ու գիշերվա մեջ պառկում եմ մենակ
 Քո կողքին, անգին ու միակ,
 Քո դագաղի մոտ՝ այս ծովի ափին,
 Գերեզմանիդ մոտ՝ այս ծովի ափին:

(Թարգմանություն՝ Ս. Մկրտչյանի <http://granish.org/anabel-li/>)

The context reveals the tragedy of kingdom by the sea where the souls of two young lovers interweaved in such a way that even angels envied them. The hero is shrouded in grief and pain, because the evil wind stole Annabel Lee, locked her in a tomb on the kingdom by the sea. The concept of love is reinforced by the following expression *But our love it was stronger by far than the love* which was translated into Armenian as *սակայն սերը մեր սիրուց էլ էր խոր* which efficiently reverberates the metaphorical expression and its deep context. The repetition of the pronoun *my* (*my beautiful Annabel Lee, chilling and killing my Annabel Lee, of my darling, my darling, my life and my bride*) condensed the expressive–emotional–evaluative overtones of the poem and emphasized the love sorrow, grief and pain of the author. In the Armenian translation the repetition of pronoun *my* – *իմ* is also employed which is introduced by means of the mechanism of translation compensation, like *ես ու իմ Անաբել Լին, Սառնց իմ Անաբել Լին, Իմ աննման Անաբել Լին*:

One cannot fail to observe that the work of a translator is complex procedure, as he is constantly faced with the difficulty of conveying ethnic–cultural components, realia, phrases and connotative expression, but translation also inevitably reflects the translator’s language and style. As translator is a reader, an interpreter and stylist, as he/she has individual style and stylistic choices, ideology, background knowledge. And this personal style may be generated in the process of transposition of the source text. It is not accidental that the 18th century German translator–philologist A. Schlegel considers translation a competition stating that either the author wins or the translator. Sometimes one can come across with the pessimistic approach relating to the issue of equivalence, which is *traduttore–tradittore* (*Latin*) – if we translate this quotation word for word, it will be perceived as (the translator is a traitor) – the translator can not reverberate the original by preserving the form and content. In this connection, Malmkjær (2004) suggests the notion of “translational stylistics”, which aims at describing the style and language of the translator, his/her translation recreations, choices and solutions in the target text. Translational stylistics is interconnected with comparative studies, which carries out the research within the framework of original and its

translation or translations. For instance, two translations of the same text have multifaceted variations and interpretations incorporated by the translator.

Let's analyze the original text in Classical Armenian (grabar) and the translations. The process of translation of the extracts of the 5th century is not an easy task at all which presupposes different methods and approaches. Apparently there is a subject of the time and space between the author/historian and the translator.

Երկնէր երկին,
Երկնէր երկիր,
Երկնէր և ծովն ծիրանի.
Երկն ի ծովուն ունէր և գկարմրիկն եղեգնիկ.
Ընդ եղեգան փող ծուխ ելանէր,
Ընդ եղեգան փող բոց ելանէր.
Եվ ի բոցոյն վազէր խարտեաշ պատանեկիկ.
Նա հուր հեր ունէր.
Ապա թէ բոց ունէր սօրոս,
Եվ աչկունք էին արեգակունք:

Մովսէս Խորենացի Պատմութիւն Հայոց

Heaven was in travail, earth was in travail, the purple sea was also in travail,
in the sea travail also gripped the red reed.
From the tube of the reed came forth smoke,
from the tube of the reed came forth flame.
From the flame a red-headed young boy ran out.
He had fire for hair, and had flame for beard, and his eyes were suns.

R. Thomson

The sky is turbulent
Turbulent the earth, turbulent the purple sea
And turbulent also the red reed in the sea
Smoke curled out of the reed
Flame came out of the reed
And out of the reed a fair child came forth
His hair glowed, his beard flamed
And his eyes were suns.

Armenian Poetry. Old and New, Tolegian Aram et al, Detroit, 1979, page 33

Evidently, the translators transfer the ancient Armenian verse differently for the benefit of the natural smoothness of the text by using their own personal stylistic and linguistic choices. In the extract an attention is paid to the form and content trying to reproduce faithfully the features of original, however the translators faced up a double challenge: the art of the original author and the English-speaking environment. The translators employed different strategies for transmitting the

thematic complexity of the original into the different sociocultural context.

Conclusion

Thus, the accumulation of certain theoretical and practical materials gives an opportunity to conclude that the translation can be evaluated through the comparative approach. The role of translator is the preservation of style and language of the original. Edgar Allan Poe's poetry is a unique piece of verbal creativity, highlighting the overtones of Romantic period. Yet, as we have seen the Armenian translation of his poem Annabel Lee has its own undeniable merits. Preserving the linguostylistic peculiarities of the original the translator transmitted the interplay of versified creativity, prosodic features and made the reader feel the essence of the life and love. At the same time the translator helped the target reader evaluate the poetic environment and the epoch.

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Գասպարյան Լուիզա

Եվրասիա միջազգային համալսարանի Օդար լեզուների և գրականության
ամբիոնի դասախոս, Մ. Աբեղյանի անվան գրականության ինստիտուտի սվազ
գիտաշխատող,
ԳԱԱ ՀՀ, բանասիրական գիտությունների թեկնածու
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ԳԵՂԱՐՎԵՍԱԿԱՆ ԹԱՐԳՄԱՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՀԱՄԱՐԺԵՔՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՆԵՐՀԱՅԵՑՈՒՄՆԵՐԸ (Էդգար Ա. Պոի “Անաբեղ Լի” պոեմի նյութի հիման վրա)

Հոդվածի առանցքում գեղարվեստական թարգմանության՝ որպես բարդ
մտածական գործընթացի, տեսական և գործնական ուսումնասիրությունն է:

Հետազոտության հիմքում համարժեքության գաղափարն է, որն լուսարանվում է Էդգար Պոի Անաբել Լի անգլերեն և հայերեն թարգմանության համեմատության լույսի ներքո: Պոեմի մետալեզվի մեկնաբանությունը հնարավորություն է ընձեռում համակողմանի գնահատել թարգմանության գեղագիտական համարժեքությունը:

Հիմնաբառեր. գեղարվեստական թարգմանություն, համարժեքություն, համեմատական վերլուծություն, գեղագիտություն, Էդգար Պո, Անաբել Լի, հայերեն թարգմանություն, պոեզիա, մեկնաբանություն:

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ПЕРЕВОД И ЕГО ЭСТЕТИЧЕСКАЯ ЭКВИВАЛЕНТНОСТЬ (на материале Эдгара А. По “Аннабель Ли”)

В статье рассматривается теоретико-практическое исследование художественного перевода как сложного процесса. Исследование основано на концепции эквивалентности, которая раскрывается в свете сравнения поэмы Эдгара По «Аннабель Ли» и ее армянского перевода. Метаязыковая интерпретация стихотворения дает возможность всесторонне оценить эстетическую эквивалентность перевода.

Ключевые слова: художественный перевод, эквивалентность, сравнительный анализ, эстетика, Эдгар По, Аннабель Ли, армянский перевод, стихи, интерпретация.

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