

Peculiarities of Translating Poetry on the Basis of Comparative Analysis of Russian, English, French Variants of F.I. Tutchefvs Poem «Silentium!»

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Abstract: Being one of the most challenging fields of translator's activity translation of poetry needs special principles and criteria different from those applied in translation of prose. When translating poetry the collision between the content and the form is inevitable and since it is not an easy job to convey both the form and the content some aspects of the source text can be missing. Unfortunately, a complete semantic-functional and compositional-structural equivalence cannot be reached. The hypothesis is that despite the fact that the cultures are different both formal and dynamic equivalence can be achieved. In order to prove it comparative semantic, linguo-stylistic and structural analysis of the Russian, English and French variants of the poem «Silentium!» was undertaken.

Keywords: poetry, rhythm, metre, rhyme, intonation, stanza, formal equivalence, dynamic equivalence, stylistic devices, syntactic structure, iambus, trochee, dactyl, amphibrach, anapest, pyrrhic.

INTRODUCTION

Poetry is a special way of speech organization, artistic creative work expressed mainly in verse. Poetry is characterized by harmonious rhythm which structure makes up the framework of the poetic sense - a specific world outlook, a particular angle of view chosen by the author. When studying poetry one should reconcile oneself to the fact that many significant problems are still remaining unsolved by the science. The analysis of literature in the sphere of the theory and practice of translation reveals that the issues of translating poetry are of a great difficulty because a poetic text is dependent upon language more than prose. Moreover, due to the genre specificity not only the content but rhythmical and structural particulars of the source text must be conveyed. On the one hand, very often the form is sacrificed for the content. On the other hand, a lyric translated as prose is not an adequate source text equivalent. Though such translation conveys the concept it fails to convey the emotional colouring while the translated version must produce on the reader the same emotional impact as the original text.

The aim of this article is to make comparative analysis of the poem «Silentium!» and its translations from Russian to English and French to find out whether the translators managed to convey both the emotional impact and the poem's structural organization. It is also important to examine those language means, which the translators used in order to convey the author's communicative intention.

Three-way linguopoetic analysis of «Silentium!» and its translations

The poem «Silentium!» was written by a most distinguished Russian poet of the XIX century Fedor Ivanovich Tutchef whose laconic poems contain exceptional expression of a deep philosophical thought presented not by bare notions but by exiting emotions and picturesque images.

His poetry is so diverse - it has reticent motives in it, isolation elements so typical of romantic inexpressibility of a man's inner world. The poet tries both to convey his individual emotional experience and to comprehend the role of a man on the Earth. The creative work of this outstanding poet is beyond all doubt our invaluable heritage that Russia can be proud of. And the poem «Silentium!» is an integral part of it. Here is the text of the poem.

"SILENTIUM!"

Молчи, скрывайся и таи

И чувства и мечты свои -

Пуускай в душевной глубине

Встают и заходят оне
Безмолвно, как звезды в ночи, -
Любуйся ими и молчи.

Как сердцу высказать себя:
Другому как понять тебя:
Поймет ли он, чем ты живешь:
Мысль изреченная есть ложь.
Взрывая, возмутишь ключи, -
Питайся ими и молчи.

Лишь жить в себе самом умей -
Есть целый мир в душе твоей
Таинственно-волшебных дум;
Их оглушит наружный шум,
Дневные разгонят лучи, -
Внимай их пенью - и молчи!..

"SILENTIUM!"

Tais-toi et garde en toi
Tes sentiments et tes rêves.
Dans les profondeurs de ton ame,
Qu'ils s'élèvent et déclinent
En silence, comme les étoiles dans la nuit.
Sache les contempler et te taire.
Le cœur - saurait-il s'exprimer ?
Un autre - saurait-il te comprendre?
Peut-il entrer dans ta raison de vivre ?
Toute pensée qui s'exprime est mensonge.
En les faisant éclater, tu troubleras tes sources.
Sache seulement t'en nourrir et te taire.
Apprendre a ne vivre qu'en soi-même!
Dans ton âme est tout un monde
De pensées magiques et mystérieuses.
Le bruit du dehors les assourdira
Les rayons du jour les dissiperont.
Sache écouler leur chant et te taire.

"SILENTIUM!"

Speak not, lie hidden, and conceal
the way you dream, the things you feel.
Deep in your spirit let them rise
akin to stars in crystal skies
that set before the night is blurred:
delight in them and speak no word.
How can a heart expression find?
How should another know your mind?
Will he discern what quickens you?
A thought once uttered is untrue.
Dimmed is the fountainhead when stirred:
drink at the source and speak no word.

Live in your inner self alone

within your soul a world has grown,
the magic of veiled thoughts that might
be blinded by the outer light,
drowned in the noise of day, unheard...
take in their song and speak no word

The principle theme of «Silentium!» touches upon the inner world of a person. The poem in itself is a narration about the mystery of a man's thoughts and feelings. It describes the solitude of people and of the author himself. A man's thoughts are doomed to silence like «the stars in crystal skies». Tutchев tries to say that words are nothing as compared with thoughts. He implies that the world, especially invisible, is so diverse and complicated that for the expression of life's real phenomena the generally accepted language is too poor and thus it causes the falsehood of our speech «Мысль изреченная есть ложь». In the title itself one feels solemnity for the author has titled the poem by the Latin word «Silentium!», not by its Russian equivalent. Being oversaturated with imperative intonation the poem does not contain polemics nor does it have a person to argue with. It rather consoles a person in despair explaining to someone who is perplexed how to live in this world.

In the poem the author calls a reader to listen carefully to the magic of the veiled thoughts in his own mysterious soul.

Divided in three stanzas, the poem consists of 18 lines. Now we will analyse a few lines in order to find out which variant of translation was the most successful one.

Молчи, скрывайся и таи

(U — U — UUU —)

Speak **not**, lie **hidden** and conceal

(U — U — U UU —)

Tais-toi et garde en toi

(—UU —UU)

Semantically, the first line of the poem is a persistent repetition, which sounds like an appeal, a persuasion. The intonation is imperative, it is achieved significantly by the poem's metre, namely iambic trimeter. The English translation is quite correct for it conveys both the imagery and the emotional tone. Moreover, the author managed to preserve the metre - iambic trimeter accompanied by pyrrhics. He uses also inversion (speak not) in order to strengthen the imperative intonation. When it comes to the French variant of the translation we can find out that the emotional tone is less impressive than in the English one for the French line contains only two imperative forms - «tais-toi» and «garde» that makes the author's appeal sound shadowy. Doing this the French translator fails to preserve the structure of the line - instead of iambic trimeter accompanied by pyrrhics he employs dactyl thus depriving the line of its determined force.

Безмолвно, как звезды в ночи, -

(U — UU — UU —)

That **set** before the **night** is **blurred**:

(U — UUU — U —)

En **silence**, comme les étoiles dans la **nuit**

(UU — UUUU — UU —)

In the fifth line Tutchев resorts to the archaic word «звезды» instead of «звёзды» to make the word sound in a stately manner. The keyword of the line is «безмолвно». However, the author of the English translation omits it while this word is an integral part of the phrase. Moreover, the translator fails to preserve the emotional impact of the line as he neither finds any archaic equivalent nor compensates it. The rhythmical structure of the line is violated too - instead of iambic trimeter with pyrrhics the translator uses iambic trimeter with a prolonged pyrrhic. The French translator finds an equivalent for the word «безмолвно» (en silence). Nevertheless, he violates the emotional impact as well failing to find the archaic form for the word «звезды». He uses anapaest of three feet accompanied by pyrrhics.

Как сердцу высказать себя:

(— —U— UUU —)

How can a heart expression find?

(— U U—U—U—)

Le **couer** - **saurait-il s'exprimer?**

(U —U —UUU —)

The first line of the second stanza begins with the question - Как сердцу высказать себя? It is noteworthy that such kind of rhetorical question is particularly typical for Russian mentality. Formulated in this way the question can convey perfectly the agony of a man's soul. That is why the phrase is so expressive which is conveyed quite successfully in the French translation by means of inversion (Le couer - saurait-il s'exprimer?). In the Russian line the four words are equally stressed and emphasized by voice as we would do in a real debate. Along with this the question word «как» is charged with the special semantic stress. A spondee appearing in this case (Как сердцу...) induces a reader to make a semantic pause. Thus the line begins with a spondee, then it changes for iambus and then - for a prolonged pyrrhic. The metre of the English variant of translation is iambic tetrameter alternating with a pyrrhic. The author of the French translation uses iambic trimeter with a prolonged pyrrhic at the end of the line.

Взрываю, возмутить ключи, -

(U-UUU-U-)

Dimmed is the fountainhead when stirred:

(— UU — UUU—)

En **les faisant éclater tu troubleras tes sources.**

(U —U —UU--UU —U—)

In the fifth line of the second stanza the author warns the reader that trying to understand the inner world of another person he (the reader) is likely to damage the relationship with his counterpart, to violate the peace and the harmony of his soul never reaching the goal. The author of the English translation conveys the poet's communicative intention quite accurately with inversion (Dimmed is the fountainhead), hereby he underlines the keyword «dimmed» putting it first. The water in a spring becomes dim when stirred. The same occurs with a man's inner world which will seem to be more mysterious and inconceivable than before.

In this line the English translator uses iambic trimeter accompanied by a prolonged pyrrhic. The English translator applies dactylic trimeter with a prolonged pyrrhic. The author of the French translation like the author of the English one failed to preserve the line's structural composition - he uses iambic hexameter changing to a pyrrhic, then to spondee, and then to pyrrhic again. So the four words in the French line (En les faisant éclater) correspond to the lapidary form of adverbial participle «взрываю». That is why the divergence of the line's rhythmical structure is so big.

CONCLUSION

As a result of this analysis and comparison of variants of translation we can state that translating poetry is a real challenge. Each poem is unique, it has an individual flavor and even within a most conservative traditional metric pattern it is marked by a rhythm, pitch and inflection of its own. It is a pointless exercise to preserve absolute fidelity to the original text, but it is necessary at least to try to preserve as much as possible of the source text imagery. Thus, when translating poetry both formal and dynamic equivalence can be reached except for rare cases. Such exceptions are mainly rooted in nations' mentality and culture differences as well as in their languages peculiarities.

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