

T. S. ELIOT IN THE ALBANIAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE

Enkelena Shockett (Qafleshi), Dr.
E-mail enkelena@yahoo.com

Abstract:

In this article, I attempt to investigate how the multiplicity of readings develops various translations of the same text, how the translated versions strive to keep the same, or almost the same authenticity, authority and genuineness like the source text they come from, how text analysis explains the variants which are the products of readings and how *mismatches*, if ever found by exercising close reading on the source text, justify them either theoretically or practically, as they express the tendencies that these readings never end. On the contrary, they are subjected to constant interpretations, which evoke *manipulations*.

In order to accomplish this, I will refer to *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* written by T.S. Eliot and its translated versions in the Albanian language and culture pointing how the English linguistic imperialism has affected the Albanian linguistic realm.

Key words: cultural mediator, calqued loans, English linguistic imperialism, text analysis, mismatches.

1. Introduction

Translation is a social system. And as such, it has its identity derived from the social system to which it belongs. The translation consolidates its borders and frames the interpretations encouraged through close reading.

In the attempts to construct a special dialogue and also a constant dialogue among all possible translators who show commitment in a single source text, we see a correlation of interpretations of the same source text that diverge into translated variants. In this light, if we perceive affinities in target products, which, eventually, frame interpretations of the same source text, we assert that these translations attempt to avoid different readings. Otherwise, they are assumed to preserve the various values and norms due to readings applied as a single source text. And, indeed, if this phenomenon occurs, the variants result to effectively resonate more faithfully the source text and envisage diachronically its text and content message. Furthermore, the variants demonstrate the development of linguistic and cultural oriented reading powers of translators. Towards the original text, they exercise their authority and authenticity.

It is amazing how the Albanian reader became familiar with the distinguished American-British writer T. S. Eliot. It was the Albanian writer and translator R. Marku who has specifically dealt with him and has

translated into Albanian *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*. To achieve the intentions expressed out, of course, there are other variants of the same poem to refer to, as you will see below*.

Eliot's *Prufrock* Kadija (2001:142) given as a modern man, who is a split, bewildered, tentative person and a researcher of the spiritual desert in which he lives and a half conforming *Dasein* to its values, as well as a symbolic creature of modern social and sexual failure, is similar to R. Marku's *Prufrock*. And the difference is that the latter is articulated in the Albanian language and becomes part of the Albanian culture and literature. In addition, the application of various readings of the same source text, which motivates us to create new translations preserving their respective authenticity, authority, identity and genuineness also become part of the Albanian culture and literature. Translation per se does not exist.

I will further describe the act of communication that R. Marku has featured as a *cultural mediator* and closely investigate the structure of his translated version as a *reading text*, which is institutionalized in the Albanian culture and which also creates the premises for his *annihilation* as new readings derived from hermeneutically interpreting the same source text.

This occurs because the same culture encourages retranslations. From a very quick stand, I could say *equivalence* is not a characteristic found in Marku's translation. Generally, it is assigned to the translated text by external intervention that mirrors the bilingual and bicultural background of the translator. This is the reason why, *dynamics of meaning* certainly assists the creation of other reading texts, counterparts of which are the translated versions of the same source. They are rewritings of the existent versions, which undergo improvements. The improvements reinforce the interlinguistic phenomenon and reading skills within a target language in which the reference includes also, unquestionably, the source text.

There are also various readings that originate directly in the same source text. In addition, they remain translated versions of the same source text, because, in any above mentioned endeavors, the reference to the source text is preserved either closely because of retranslating process, or intuitively because of inter interpreting process, or, encouragingly, because of contrastive analysis. However, Marku sees a cultural mediator as- ' a person who facilitates communication understanding and acting between persons or groups who differ with respect to language and culture. The role of the mediator is performed by interpreting the expressions, intentions, perception and expectations of each cultural group to the other, that is by establishing and balancing the communication between them. In order to serve as a link in this sense, the mediator must be able to participate to some extent in both cultures. Thus a mediator must be to a certain extent bicultural (Katan 1997 :31).

2. Linguistics and translation: text-analysis

I have selected a few lines to examine R. Marku's translation in order to illustrate how he established his self-appropriation and self-knowledge about the original source to make T. S. Eliot memorable. And, indeed, confront to Eliot, he is defined as the first type of representing the client receptor system, which remarkably acknowledged his position, initially as a reader of Eliot's poem in the English version (Eliot's client). In addition, he attempted to empower and enrich his role by jumping into the second type of representing the client receptor system – the Albanian reader. We may examine closely the structure in the following lines:

***Love Song of A. J. Prufrock* by T. S. Eliot**

*And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!
Smoothed by long fingers,
Asleep... tired... or it malingers,
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.
Should I, after the tea and cakes and ices,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?
But though I have swept and fasted, wept and prayed,
Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon
platter,
I am no prophet- and here's no great matter;
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,
And in short, I was afraid.*

***Këngë dashurie e A.J.Prufrok* from T.S.Eliot translated by R.Marku**

*Dhe pasdrekja, në mbrëmje, fle aq e paqtë!
E përkëdhelur nga gishtërinj të gjatë
E përgjumur... e lodhur... a e shtrirë e sëmurë në shtrat,
E shtrirë mbi dysheme, këtu, pranë meje dhe teje.
A do të mundem që pas çajit, dhe pastave dhe akulloreve,
Ta çoj momentin në krizën e vet?
Por ndonëse kam qarë dhe agjëruar, kam qarë e jam lutur,
Ndonëse kam parë kokën time (të bërë pak tullace) të ma sjellin
në pjatancë.
Nuk jam profet- e kjo s'ka hiç rëndësi
Kam parë çastin e madhështisë time të lëkundet
Dhe kam parë Lakenë e përjetshme të ma mbaj pallton e të
Skërmitet,*

E me pak fjalë, kam ndjerë frikë.

As far as the structural form of the above lines is concerned, the original text consists of 13 lines that make up the poetry text in question, whereas the translated version comprises 12 lines. The lack of one line stands for the expressive devices employed by the translator. This observation does not describe the Albanian language as *weak* and this phenomenon does not stigmatize the Albanian language at all. Neither does it represent a lack of prestige, nor lack of authority from the part of R. Marku as a translator. On the contrary, as the losses and the gains are attributed to the common associative norms that design the attempts to preserve the form and the content of the original text, the lack of one line reveals the effects produced when semantic devices charged with highly expressive powers are used and certain calculations, surely, envisage no meaning changes, except *manipulation* of length of poem without violating its content, but preserving strongly the *dynamics of meaning*.

From this viewpoint, the work of remembering the original coincides with the creation of self-founding and self-knowing the source, which, eventually, is presented in the route Marku performs from Self to Self, as he both enjoys the parameters of the English reader and the Albanian reader (text appropriator in the Albanian) to reach the Other, which consists of T.S. Eliot's poem (original text). At this point, the identity he attempts to shape really structuralizes how this poem is comprehended and how untranslatability becomes a surmounting obstacle due to Marku's bilingual and bicultural background.

In addition, what strikes our attention relates to how punctuation remains alike in both versions. And, of course, the syntax employed by the translator (R. Marku) agrees to some extent with Eliot's. Basically, the constructed sentences range from complex that either possess subjects or omit them obviously. They (subjects), when included, demonstratively become expressed by pronouns and verb inflections in the Albanian version. Certainly, this illustrates a particular characteristic of the Albanian language. They stand out as key words equally in both variants.

If noticed carefully, both versions essentially go through the following critical grammatical and stylistic analysis, which is as follows:

*Should I, after the tea and cakes and ices,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?* **English version**

*A do të mundem që pas çajit, dhe pastave dhe akulloreve,
Ta çoj momentin në krizën e vet?* **Marku's version**

The subject **I** in the English version is replaced by the verb inflection **mund-em** (the verb in the Albanian language is: **mund** and the form **mundem** demonstrates the first person of the verb conjugated) and **ta = të + a** (short form of the personal pronoun **I**. In Albanian, this form is called *trajtë e shkurtër e përemrit vetor*. Intentionally, the tenses employed by the translator in these lines are: **e ardhme në dëftore** and **e tashme në lidhore** for the **present tense** in **Indicative** and **Subjunctive Mood**; particularly in Interrogative sentence they are expressed by an **auxiliary particle (të)** and the **basic verb** which is **çoj**. Thus the verb **should have** in the English is presented by two verbs in the Albanian: **do të mundem** and **t(ë)a çoj**.

In pursuit to this methodological approach (grammar translation and word per word translation) I indicate that, in Albanian, the first verb explicitly expresses not only desire and ability, but also permission.

The tenses employed in both versions correspondingly can be organized in the following table, which consequently facilitates the criticism and analysis:

English Verbs	Albanian Verbs
<i>Sleeps</i> (simple present);	<i>fle</i> koha e tashme
<i>[is] smoothed</i> (simple present, passive, to be is omitted);	<i>e përkëdhelur</i> mbiemër foljor
<i>Malingers</i> (simple present);	<i>e shtrirë e sëmurë në shtrat</i> mbiemër foljor
<i>[is] Stretched</i> (simple present, passive, to be is omitted);	<i>e shtrirë</i> mbiemër foljor
<i>Should have</i> (present, Subjunctive);	<i>do të mundem e ardhme, dëftore...ta çoj e tashme, lidhore</i>
<i>Have swept ... fasted</i> (present perfect)	<i>kam qarë ... agjeruar e kryer e thjeshtë</i>
<i>... wept,</i> (present perfect)	<i>kam qarë e kryer e thjeshtë</i>
<i>... prayed</i> (present perfect)	<i>jam lutur e kryer e thjeshtë</i>

Regarding the content of the message transmitted from the semantic point of view, it can be said that the author has utilized 84 words (*content* and *function* words), whereas the translator has employed about 113 words (*content* and *function* words). Through this sort of statistics, I notice clearly that 53 words are *content* words in the translated text. And indeed, there is a remarkable disproportion between *content* and *functional* words in both versions, which circumstantially marks sharp differences between the English and the Albanian, but this does not diminish at all the role of key words which are also content words. And certainly as the reference of my research frames within Eliot's poem another question to pose is if its translation really suffices the frame of target culture. And envisaged as such,

I think functionality of Marku's version could revolve round the assumption that my analysis and investigation of his version should meet the requirements to determine the envisaged role for his translated text in the Albanian culture and to explain its reception by readers and critics in Albania as a typical work to remember Eliot by.

Generally speaking, without penetrating into details, the English is assigned as a syntactical language and slightly analytical, whereas the Albanian enjoys completely the parameters of analytical language. Bearing this in mind, I emphasize the message is faithfully transmitted without touching the originality of the writer due to the technique of *equivalent terms usage* and the *word for word* translation, as I mentioned above. To some extent this seems to diminish the poetic value explored in the original text, but yet the tones and musicality of the original is vividly preserved and its figurativity.

Consequently, the poetics and rhetoric utilized by Marku transcend reconcilably Eliot's intentions in the poem, although slight variations are noticed of Marku's semantic choice to be clarified later in this research.

However, in the above two lines, the structural analysis employed to figure out their essential differences, results in the assumption that the translator, in order to remain faithful to the original, has utilized the terms *momentin* and *krizën*, that both are *loans* and key words. According to calquing process, they enjoy the features of the Albanian language. They have inflectional paradigms; do preserve semantic value, and belong to a certain syntactic category. It occurs that, through this process, *new lexemes* are created in the Albanian language, but it also represents the *macro-structure of the text*. Although considered as *calqued loans*, they do not shatter the entity and uniqueness of his version derived from the original.

The question is to find out the reasons of this choice, but yet it does not matter so much as there is a variety of reasons that have enhanced this strategy employed by him. It is obvious that in this case we certainly deal with a new translation strategy applied in Albania. And what holds true remains also within the frame that such loans add more color and soul probably because of their *universal* usage. So, the *dynamics of meaning* is equally preserved. This could be another reason that has forced Mark to decide on loans utilization. One more reason relates to how their use collocates to the fact that the author attempts to develop the the Albanian language by appropriating *universal terms* of English origin applicable not only in limited contexts, but all contexts, including even the poetic context I revolve round in this research.

So, I feel myself free to attribute this encountered phenomenon also as a cultural asymmetry – a feature engendered by rapid cultural transformation and positioned to be a crucial contextual factor in translating

into the *weaker* cultures, such as the Albanian culture probably, although I really do not like this designation. However, this asymmetry affects R. Marku's choice in terms of *domestication* and *foreignization* and thus, it urges me to present an analysis of possible corpus translations that constitute a trend that can't be attributed to lack of competence on the part of R. Marku, but which encourages me to a *correction process* and provides the effects of the Albanian cultural transition on translation practices – a recent perspective of Translation studies in Albania.

Marku manages to identify his text in terms of culture and situation. What he creates represents a multi-dimensional structure, which requires an analysis on its wholeness. This sort of analysis projects on the interdependence of culture and translation and it also allows me to attempt to elucidate the dialectic tension that prevails in translated text, because of relationship between translation and language – in-text, as Steiner has asserted it.

With all these assumptions provided theoretically or empirically, explicitly or implicitly to justify the techniques and approaches and methodologies employed in translation process, I significantly accept that R. Marku's version sounds apparently and profoundly similar to the original where it has come from. The *mismatches* noticed hereby recall *English linguistic imperialism*, which makes them function as likely English words, but only in the textual bilingualism afforded by R. Marku's translated text. Both calques created in the Albanian target text represent two new *lexemes* with specific *inflectional paradigms* preserving the same *lexical meaning* explored in the English dictionary. Along with this, I could emphasize that the key lexical items are preserved and they frame the same semantic shade in its likeness insofar.

3. Dynamics in meaning

Turning back to the issue of *dynamics in meaning*, I consider the *mismatches* investigated in Marku's version by looking up at the Albanian language dictionary where it is noticed that the term *moment* means *çast* and it bears stylistic and emotional effects in itself; in addition, this lexeme is commonly used in books. Considered from the lexical viewpoint of a receptor/reader, I emphasize that the choice of R. Marku for the English word *moment* is not so accurate for the Albanian readership, which looks for a certain standardized language. Under this assumption, as a result of my process of understanding the situation where Marku has involved himself in and his socio-cultural background as well as my personal experience, I reckon that the proper choice could have been *çast* instead of *momentin* (calque). Similarly, the word "*krizën*" might have been substituted by *kulmin* (calque) that illustrates the figurative meaning to describe properly what the term *crisis* really

possesses lexically in the English language. In pursuit of displaying the reason for these choices, I could also assess that this phenomenon really evokes his communicative level with Eliot's poem allowing himself to produce these prototypical scenes based on the frame of the text, on the frame of his reader-translator modeling cast, due to his experience and internalized knowledge of Eliot's poem. Consequently, Marku has activated the scenes diverged from Eliot's intentions, which constitute a frequent cause of translation error.

Observed closely, the above suggestions might improve a little bit the linguistic shape of Eliot's poem in Albanian – a 'shape' that recalls the existence of *English linguistic imperialism* in the realm of diction. It really evokes the scholastic attitude towards the reasons that encourage *asymmetry* in translating processes; both theorized concepts and researching reflections are accomplished successfully.

Moreover, it justifies my personal reflective stand towards the potentiality of the Albanian language never to be described as *weak*, although the imperial influences of the English culture are too strong and it randomly occurs to avoid its addictive power. However, that lexical substance could vest his poem with more features that obviously could balance the tendency towards the real demands of the Albanian readership in general.

*Should I, after the tea and cakes and ices,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?*

Eliot's poem

*A do të mundem që pas çajit, dhe pastave dhe akulloreve,
Ta çoj momentin në krizën e vet?* **Marku's version**

*A mund pas çajit, dhe pastave dhe akullore,
Të kem atë forcë për të përballur çastin në kulmin e vet »?* **another version**

In this way, the lines take breath in complete Albanian rhythm and the readership absorbs it completely and easily. It becomes digested and Eliot remains both a *cannibalized* subject and an object of such a quality, as its meanings, content, intentions are appropriated perfectly establishing a *symmetrical* balance.

In addition, I could say that the new version remains always open to later repetitions and new interpretations; in total, they cannot be expected to be definite readings of a text and exhaust all its meanings.

Since both versions preserve the authenticity and authority of Eliot's poem (original text) and enjoy authentic identities in terms of their common

source, even though we notice *linguistic parallel texts*, which collocate round semantic frames that express directly the *dynamics of meaning*, they are variants that exist in correlation.

Conclusion

To conclude, I would rather lay the emphasis on the fact that Albanian language should open to the imperial influences of the English culture, although it is almost impossible to avoid the effects of such an influence and pretend to ignore the outcomes from it. As this research emphasizes the role of text analysis as a marker of the translation process, I clarified how Marku has applied methodologies and approaches differently described as post-colonial perspectives of translation studies and which collocate to the tendency to produce translated texts carrying *hybridized* lexemes that transmit common *semantic values* rooted in *textual bilingualism*.

And, indeed, I express again the idea that new versions remain always open to later repetition and new interpretations, as this research has aimed to illustrate so far. They cannot be expected to be definite readings of a text and exhaust all its meanings. Presumably, they acquire the same authenticity, genuineness and authority of their original texts, and they exist in correlation.

Note

* *Rudolf Marku*, Albanian by origin, was born in Lezha in the year 1950. He is a poet, a translator and a rather potential politician in Albania who actually lives in Great Britain. It is to be highly praised his undertaking to bring Eliot into the Albanian environment, to give his work the delicate flavors of the Albanian language, rhythm and artistic figurativity, even though he is recognized to transmit faithfully the original text. He decided willingly to deal with the above poem of Eliot to make it known to the Albanian readership, to cover a considerable gap related to Eliot's masterpieces neglected by the regime; by this undertaking, he enriched the existing translated literature in Albanian. The fact that Eliot is noted for his worldwide reputation and literary citizenship in the world inspired him to translate his poem into Albanian. He has presented to the Albanian readership *Prufrock and Other Observations* entitled *Tokë e shkretë*, which includes several songs from *Waste Land* and *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*.

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