

**PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO THE TRANSLATION
OF THE BOOK VERSUS THE TRANSCRIBED VERSION
OF THE MOVIE BASED ON THE NOVEL
THE BOOK THIEF BY MARKUS ZUSAK**

Cristina PLATON, Facultatea de Limbi și Literaturi Străine

Acest articol are ca obiectiv analiza specificului traducerii literare în baza traducerii romanului „Hoțul de cărți” de Markus Zusak din limba engleză în limba română. Articolul se concentrează pe abordarea pragmatică în traducerea literară, adică dificultățile de traducere și strategiile aplicate de traducător în funcție de aspectele socioculturale, istorice, lingvistice din textul-sursă. Menționăm impotanța competențelor vaste și multiaspectuale ale traducătorului literar.

Translation can be found everywhere in our life. When we watch a foreign film we hear the voice of a translator. When we read a novel, we read the translation. Especially if we talk about literary translation, we may mention the competences and skills a good literary translator should possess in order to render a faithful Target Text.

While dealing with a piece of literature, the translator has to find the balance between the two cultures, the language s/he translates from and into. And, to be honest, not all translators could behave as a co-author and create a text out of the original text. Beside well-mastering of a foreign language, literary translation also demands an artistic sense [2].

One of the most important aspects of literary translation is the knowledge the translator has about the Source Language country, culture and mentality. More than that, the translator, the second author, is to deliver the style of the creator of the work and also his literary intention, preserving harmony and balance of the piece of literature.

When we speak about translating literature, we understood that there is no need “to stick to a word” as the context, in general, is what really matters in a translation and by context we mean the history and culture of the Source Text [1].

When translating the text the translator should turn on his imagination and imagine himself as a writer. His responsibility is enormous, as translating literary works is not an easy task, and by assuming such a translation he “signs” a contract of imagination and fidelity. Each literary text has two types of information, the visual one and the deducible one. And here is the struggle. The translator may not know the message hidden between the lines and here comes the tendency to translate all the information, so as not to miss any relevant component. This ability is individual and depends on various factors like creativity and experience. But this method of translation of literature has a dangerous side, it can deviate from the original and a conflict may appear between the translator and the client. To stick to the original text or to adapt it here is the most challenging question [5].

When translating a piece of literature, the translator may face various struggles. S/he may choose to render it lexically, that is to say word-for-word. Translating literally may reflect the syntax of the Source Text, but would be hardly a Target Text. Or the translator may opt for a syntax that may match or to be an equivalent to the syntax of the original text in relation to the Target Text. But these are only some problems. Also, we may consider local problems, restricted to one sentence only, or general problems that would affect the entire text. It is also the translator’s decision either to preserve the temporal archaic dialect or to modernize it. It is also a possibility to give a “boring” text a new face and to make it new for the public. Each translator of literature works continuously in various dimensions, making choices on each of the three sides, the linguistic, the literary and the socio-cultural, so being given the possibility either to make the exotic or natural, historic or modern choice. Theorists believe though that modernizing a piece of literature is already re-creation, that is

inadmissible because the original text is what really matters. Others, advocate for making new a piece of literature by means of creative literature. But, completely preserving the culture of the Source Text is rarely made and a mixture of everything is often present.

No translation of a piece of literature is ever the same as to the source language readers. It is rarely considered an equivalent to the original. More than that, literary translation is full of challenges and it requires a rigorous approach on the translational transformation level [3]. In order to support everything stated above about translation difficulties, we would provide examples from the novel “The Book Thief” by Markus Zusak, and its translation into Romanian “Hoțul de cărți” by Adelina Vasiliu. It is a novel published in 2005, and screened in 2013, that narrates about the horrors of World War II, and tells the story of a young girl, Liesel, who finds solace by stealing books and sharing them with others.

If we speak about the difficulties in literary translation referring to the example of the novel “The Book Thief”, we may start from the very beginning – the title. It presented a dilemma, as the main character is a girl, thus feminine character, in English, “The Book Thief” may be attributed to both genders, the reader finding out the truth only from the context. But, in Romanian the situation is different, is either a He, masculine, or a She, feminine. As in the first pages of the novel the gender of the character is not revealed, the translator wanted to keep the mystery of it and rendered the title via an archetype, using masculine for „The Thief” – „Hoțul” instead of „Hoța”.

Another difficulty found in the novel presents the character of the Death. In English we refer to the Death as to an IT, something of no gender at all. But, things are different in Romanian. In Romanian we refer to the Death in feminine gender, SHE. Although it is not necessary that the noun is feminine, being referred to as such, it can also be masculine as well. In the novel, it is presented as a *Woman* doing *Man*'s job, a hard one, implying no emotions, as one should not get involved with such a cold job.

The delicacy of literary works is the beauty consisting of detailed and colorful descriptions and this implies the use of stylistic devices. The faithfulness of rendering such details demands keeping the author's style, that create the work so unique and liked or not by the

author. Like in the example from the novel *The horizon was beginning to charcoal* / *Orizontul începea să capete culoarea cărbunelui*. Here, the verb to adverb change, though changing its grammatical value, still preserves the effect of darkening the sky. If in English we may verbalize any noun, then in Romanian we cannot do the same with any word. And as in Romanian we cannot use a verb with the same root, the translator opted for a comparison, meaning the sky was dark like charcoal [4].

Besides stylistic devices that create the style of the author, we may mention all the borrowings that present cultural value. They also create the ambient of the period, region, traditions of a place, culture, art. In our case, we speak about WWII, Nazi Germany, Hitler and banned books. The author kept borrowed words and also translated them along with the original words. As well did the translator – she translated and also referred to the footnote in order to explain the meaning of a specific lexical unit. Mainly, in the book we may meet curse and rude words attributed to one of the characters – Rosa Hubermann. She has a quick temper, rules the household with an iron fist, and is known for straightening out previous foster children; however, though she often swears at Liesel. Among the words that are frequently met in the text we may mention: *Spinnst du? Are you stupid?* = *Spinnst du? Ești prost?*; *G'sindel - what rubbish!* = *G'sindel - Ce porcărie*; *Saukerls - Pig* = *Porc mizerabil*; *Arschloch - Asshole* = *Nenorocit*; *Scheisse - Shit* = *Rahat*.

So, literary style can be considered one of the most developed, as it differs from author to author, from translator to translator. It has no limits towards perfection. More than that, everything new that appears in this style is welcomed, as the more unusual, the better.

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*Recomandat
Rodica CARAGIA*