A Case Study in Translation Practice: Male/vs/Female Authorship

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Abstract: *The domain delineated by the theory and practice of translation constitutes an endless source of interdisciplinary approaches, beginning with a typological analysis of the text to be translated and continuing with considering translation a product, and more recently a result of not only the translator's personality and gender, but also of the social, ideological and cultural influences reflected both in the source and target text.*

Key words: *translation, descriptive text, gender analysis, meaning, equivalence*

The domain of translation studies has broadened far beyond the mere replacement of SL linguistic items with their TL equivalents, reaching sociological, cultural and ideological phenomena, becoming "a perfect interdiscipline, interfacing with a host of other fields"(Hatim, Munday 2004:169).

The present research focuses on translation seen from the perspective of both text- and function-based approaches aiming at presenting some of my personal findings concerning the assertion that men and women translate differently and pointing out the role of equivalence in the comparison of same language translations.

Text-based approaches have developed along several coordinates, leading to a sub-categorization of texts into various types allowing a direct analysis of the linguistic make-up of both SL and TL texts.

Cognitive classifications e.g. Kinneavy (1980) and Werlich (1976), concentrate on ways of conceptualizing, perceiving or portraying the world by:
a. Narration, which stands for our viewing the continuum changes of reality in a dynamic way, by providing the differentiation and interrelation of perceptions in time, texts becoming *narrative*.
b. Description, which stands for our static view focused on individual experience, by providing the differentiation and interrelation of perceptions in space- *descriptive* texts.
c. Exposition, focusing on the comprehension of general concepts through differentiation by analysis or synthesis- *expository* texts.
d. Argumentation, understood as evaluation of relations between concepts by extracting similarities, contrasts and transformations- *argumentative* texts.
e. Instruction, meaning prospective attitudes, planning of future behaviour with option and without option- *instructive* texts.

Textual specificity has been enlarged by De Beaugrande and Dressler 's procedural approach (1981) adding the categories of *scientific, didactic, literary* and *poetic* texts.

A more general classification has been made by Trosborg (1997) who distinguishes texts by taking into account two criteria:
- *purpose*, based on communicative functions, suggesting that texts are intended to inform, to express an attitude, to persuade and to create a debate
- *mode of discourse*, underlining rhetorical strategies, hence the grouping into descriptive, narrative, expository, argumentative or instrumental texts.

A typological synthesis has been proposed by Reiss who classifies texts into *informative*, *expressive* and *operative* (in Fawcett 2003: 104).

Without drawing a clear-cut line between narrative and descriptive texts we shall particularly take into account the latter's characteristics, since the selected translation samples are of a descriptive rather than a narrative character, considering description "as an autonomous whole, a semantic unit, a supplementary to the narrative allowing free insertion into the narration" (Hamon 1972: 80).

Descriptive texts can display the following features as specified in the literature:

a. A particular rhythm originating from both the iteration of the same lexical unit by the 'effect list' of nouns and adjectives and the frequency of elliptical predicate constructions.

b. Special rhetorical figures: comparison, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche.

c. Grammaticalization of full lexical words such as nouns, adjectives and static verbs.

d. Lexical, including the 'pivotal word', announcing the topic.

e. Semantic, centered on a pantonym (Hamon 1972) narrowed down to seven semantic classes*: topography*, description of a place, landscape, etc.; *cronography*, description of a period of time or an event; *prosopography*, description of the physical qualities of an individual; *etopeea*, description of the manners; *portrait*, description of both physical and moral features; *comparison***,** involving the parallel between two descriptions, in order to set forth an analogy or an opposition; *framed* description, detailed presentation of an action, a phenomenon or event.

These characteristics are retrieved in the ST and TT as necessary pace contributors to activating the next stage of the development of the action in a narrative text. With reference to translation practice, they will decide on the strategies to be adopted by the translator in order to be faithful to the original text, and yet, at the same time, to try to come up with a fluent translation.

Text-typology in translation can be a valuable source of ideological interpretation in any of its coordinates. Our interest here lies in gender reevaluations made in connection with the theory and practice of translation, aiming at generalizing upon the fact that "The differentiated use of language by males and females is more than just a matter of linguistic forms; it is the use of these forms in society and is ideologically constructed"(Leonardi 2007: 37) on power exchanges, since any language use could be a site for power relations.

The semantic theme that I have chosen to analyse in two Romanian comparative translational samples is a token of prosography. The excerpt has been taken from Truman Capote's *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and comprises the description of the physical qualities of the major character in the novella, Holly Golightly.

The TT frame corpus thus delineated is described below:

a. The ST is an online variant of *Breakfast at Tiffany's* as mentioned in the Corpus Sources.

b. The first Romanian version (TT1) that I have considered has been translated *Sandvişuri cu diamante* by Catinca Ralea and was published in 1967 in the volume *Harfa de iarbă şi alte povestiri*, Universal Literature Publishing House, Bucharest.

c. The second Romanian version (TT2) has been translated *Mic dejun la Tifanny* by Constantin Popescu having been included in the volume *Mic dejun la Tifanny şi alte povestiri*, published in 2006, Universe Publishing House, Bucharest.

d. The two Romanian versions belong to different periods of time, fact which has influenced the selection of vocabulary in both translations.

e. One Romanian variant has been translated by a female, the other by a male. We aim at identifying the equivalents which make the difference.

f. We have presented the corpus by aligning the sentences in both Romanian versions and the English text above.

ST Corpus: Truman Capote's *Breakfast at Tiffany's*
Sample Analysis 1
ST1:"I went out into the hall and leaned over the banister, just enough to see without being seen. She was still on the stairs, now she reached the landing, and the ragbag colors of her boy's hair, tawny streaks, strands of albino-blond and yellow caught the hall light.

TT1: *Sandvişuri cu diamante* by Catinca Ralea (page 379-380)	TT2: *Mic dejun la Tifanny* by Constantin Popescu (page 17)
Am ieşit pe palier si m-am aplecat peste rampă, atât cât să	Am ieşit pe palier şi m-am aplecat peste balustradă ca să-i

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pot vedea fără să fiu văzut. Era incă pe scară; dar curând ajunse pe palier. Lumina de pe palier se reflecta în culorile variate ale părului ei de băiat cu şuviţe decolorate de soare, unele de un blond albicios, altele galbene.	pot zări fără să fiu văzut. Holly era pe scară şi ajunsese la palierul ei, iar părul ei în toate culorile, tăiat băieţeşte, cu şuviţe arămii, de un blond aproape alb, sau galbene, lucea în lumina din hol.

The viewer who is the author himself, starts watching without being seen, fact which makes the description focalized on Holly and her physical qualities: ST: *I went out into the hall and leaned over the banister, just enough to see without being seen*/ TT1: *Am ieşit pe palier si m-am aplecat peste rampă, atât cât să pot vedea fără să fiu văzut.*
 / TT2: *Am ieşit pe palier şi m-am aplecat peste balustradă ca să-i pot zări fără să fiu văzut.*

In Popescu's translation of the clause *the ragbag colors of her boy's hair, tawny streaks, strands of albino-blond and yellow, caught the hall light,* the complex NP centered around the noun *păr* and its metonymical counterpart *şuviţe* follow the ST determination ordering, but unlike in the original, the translator has chosen to unload the sentence by choosing a single translational equivalent for *streaks* and *strands*. *And* has been translated by *sau* supposing that the translator might have imagined that the evening dark made the colors not so clear. Instead of *tăiat băieţeşte* as an equivalent for *her boy's hair*, I think that *tuns băieţeşte* could have also been a good variant obtained by domestication from the Romanian expression *a se tunde băieţeşte.*

In Ralea's translation there's a shift in the word order of the same clause introducing Holly's appearance, due to the fact that Romanian is much more flexible than English. Fronting of *Lumina de pe hol* as an equivalent to *hall light* placed at the end of the ST operates as a syntactic device marking the circumstances of the writer's watching. It is the pivotal word anticipating the pantonym and guiding Holly's description into Romanian, acting both as an instrument and location. The genitival construction *her boy's hair* has been rendered by *părului ei de băiat* followed by the use of the participial construction *decolorate de soare* as an equivalent for *tawny*.

Ralea's translation bears the female mark of gentleness and love of explicitness under the auspices of the linguistic phenomena of thematization which "consists in arranging words in a particular way so that readers will pay attention to specific key concepts in the sentence. This aim could be achieved by marking specific words instead of others in a sentence and this procedure could be regarded as being a way for the author to express his or her ideology"(Leonardi: 102).

 Popescu's translation stands for a male's direct way in expressing thoughts and making evaluations. His variant is a case of semantic translation, keeping to all the facets of meaning implied by the writer.
Sample Analysis 2
ST2: For all her chic thinness, she had an almost breakfast-cereal air of health, a soap and lemon cleanness, a rough pink darkening in the cheeks.

Cu toată silueta ei subţire şi elegantă, avea un aer sănătos de om care mănâncă bine dimineaţa, un aer îngrijit, care amintea de săpun şi de lămâie şi o roşeaţă violentă care-i întuneca obrajii.	Cu toată silueta ei elegantă, fata avea un aer de om sănătos, care mănâncă zdravăn dimineaţa, un aspect îngrijit, care te ducea cu gândul la săpun şi lămâie, iar în obraji îi stăruia o notă trandafirie.

The sentential context ST2 has been translated almost similarly in both variants, being an occasion for the author to express her/ his esthetic evaluation of what she/he is looking at or a commentary on the effect the sight has on her/him. The ST metaphorical adjunctions have been rendered into Romanian with a slight change in the translators' lexical choice for rendering the expression *had an almost breakfast-cereal air of health*. Popescu translates by a grammatical shift, using the adverbalized adjective *zdravăn* modifying the verb *mănâncă*, while Ralea prefers domestication using the Romanian expression *a mânca bine* with a temporal specification *dimineaţa*. Both translators use addition and shift to render the meaning of *health,* but while Popescu uses the noun *om* modified by the adjective *sănătos*, Ralea uses it to modify *aer*, which she reiterates in *aer îngrijit,* for the sake of symmetry. We can still notice some difference in the Romanian equivalents to *a rough pink darkening in the cheeks*. Popescu's translation is more poetical and mild in tone, a subjective evaluation coming from admiring young females with rosy cheeks e.g. *iar în obraji îi stăruia o notă trandafirie*. Ralea's translation *o roşeaţă violentă care-i întuneca obrajii* tries to be nearer the 'cold' meaning of the ST modifier epithet *rough* and the participle *darkening* as a means of intensifying the character's powerful reaction at external stimuli.

By way of a tentative conclusion, we can state that Ralea's translation as a female translation exhibits greater usage of features identified as "involved" while Popescu's translation as a male translation exhibits greater usage of mixed features identified as "involved -informational". We have thus found several classes of simple lexical and syntactic features whose occurrences in the STs have been translated in TTs using methods and strategies specific for descriptive texts.

The analysis that we have presented is both a continuation of previous research on the use of corpora in the theory and practice of translation (Dima 2009) and an opening chapter on studying the way in which gender evaluations can bear the mark of both the translator's gender and personality and the SL linguistic particularities.

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