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Teză de doctorat

**Translating the culturemes.
French-Romanian domain.**

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Translating the culturemes. French-Romanian domain.

Keywords: translation, traductology, translation strategies, culture, culturemes

The thesis *Translating the culturemes. French-Romanian domain* contains two main parts which are divided in four chapters. The first part consists of a theoretical background concerning the subject of this research and the second part includes the practical dimension for translating the culturemes. Therefore, this thesis refers especially to the theory and the practice of translating the culturemes.

The objective of our research is to define the translation as a communication act between two cultures, to clarify the status of the cultureme, to find the best translation strategies in order to maintain the transfer of the culturemes and to analyze the translation of some culturemes in a literary text. It refers to a concept which is new in the theory and the practice of translation for that the translator must use the most appropriate strategy for not losing the flavour of the original text. Central to our approach is this term that refers to a socio-cultural reality. Specifically, this notion is about a statement of cultural information. It may represent a real tool to study the complexity of the cultural transfer. In order to define it, we want to build up a theoretical background because we intend to exploit this subject.

The first chapter highlights the current trends in the theory of translation, insisting on the various types of translation, on the fidelity and the infidelity in the translation process. The second chapter focuses on the translation and globalisation, in the same time analyzing the transfer of a cultural message. It includes also a complex theory of the cultureme, the definition of this notion and a typology. The third chapter offers two major translation strategies proposed by Michel Ballard in his work *Le nom propre en traduction*. The fourth chapter contains an analytic and synthetic form of the corpus proposed as object of our research.

This research lies in the analysis of some culturemes and of some cultural sequences, studying the transfer of the cultural content from the source language (Romanian/French) into the target language (Romanian/French). The corpus consists of examples from Romanian literature (*Moromeții* by Marin Preda) and French literature (*Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert). We intend to highlight the way that the translators Demostene Botez, D. T.

Sarafoff, Florica Courriol Ciodaru and Maria Ivănescu have translated the culturemes into the target language. We focus also on the translation strategies used as well as on their consequences.

Regarding the novel *Madame Bovary*, we compare multiple versions of the same original text analyzing the difficulties that appear during the process of translation. If the cultural information carried by a single source unit is distributed in the target text on several units, we may speak of *dilution*. In the case of *concentration*, the information spread by a plurality of units is concentrated on a small number of units.

The cultural issues that appear represent a common challenge in the act of translation. Food and clothing habits, religious customs, concepts and objects referring to a given culture have no lexical equivalent in the target language. It's not only about a cultural transfer from the source language into the target language, but this thesis includes also the way to choose the best translation strategy in order to render in the target language the cultural information without losing the flavour of the original text. If the translator is bilingual, in the same time, he is bicultural. The experience in this area has demonstrated that while translating, the more difficult is to transfer culturally marked words from source language into target language. Finding a functional equivalent in the cultural sphere of the target text reveals the degree of mutual understanding between the two cultures. It reveals also the skill of the translator to be an interlinguistic and intercultural mediator.

The concept of *cultureme* originally was introduced by Els Oksaar in a study entitled *Kulturemtheorie*. Michel Ballard gave a special attention to this term. We may find in his books and articles the definition of this concept as well as a typology. His definitions stand upon the fact that the cultureme is a linguistic sign designating cultural referents. These can take the form of proper names or common names. In Romania, this concept appears more often in some studies at the University of Timișoara. Georgiana Lungu-Badea wrote some articles and books on the translation of culturemes.

This notion is treated as a cultural unit taking the aspect of a linguistic form containing cultural information. The cultureme must not be decomposed, because the practice of decomposition could lead to an incorrect comprehension of the text significance. This fact can change not only the intention of the author but also the intention of the source text. The meaning of a sentence is the result of a construction. Any reader is able to make contextual assumptions regarding the meaning of a sentence. We must say also that the translator acts as an intercultural negotiator. Generally, we know that the cultureme is marked by a socio-

cultural load that is specific to the source text. This can be found partly in the target text or it could not be found in the cultural sphere of the language of destination.

Regarding the typology, we made an inventory of culturemes. There are simple culturemes, complex culturemes, historical culturemes and literary culturemes. In terms of their characteristics, we may note the monoculturality, its relative status and the autonomy of the concept regarding the practice of translation.

In order to interpret a cultureme, we must observe some rules that could lead the target text to a maximum reversibility of the original text:

1. It must rebuild the initial situation of the cultureme;
2. It must find in the encyclopaedia an equivalent term;
3. It must use an equivalent term in the target text that reacts on textual plausibility criteria;
4. It must check if we arrived to an internal coherence regarding the target text;

The second part of this research includes the practice of translating the culturemes which stands on two major translation categories proposed by Michel Ballard:

- I. Preserve the specific aspect of the cultureme ;
- II. Priority to the significance and acclimatization;

The last chapter contains a comparative analysis of the translation culturemes in the novel *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert and another analysis of the Romanian culturemes transfer in French regarding the novel *Moromeții* by Marin Preda. Concerning the novel *Madame Bovary*, we used the Romanian versions translated by Demostene Botez (1983), D. T. Sarafoff (2000) and the last one is that of Florica Courriol Ciodaru (2010). We compared the French original text to its Romanian versions in order to establish the most successful version in terms of the best solutions for cultural diversity. We know that the reader of the target language has the right to faithful information and that's why we sustain that any translation can be accompanied by explanatory notes for those cultural terms. If we consider this explanatory note as a sign of weakness from the part of the translator and if we reject its use, we could not render perceptible these cultural terms.

The novel *Moromeții* by Marin Preda is considered one of the most important novels in Romanian literature. It was published in two volumes (1955 and 1967) rendering with a great fidelity the Romanian peasant reality. The writer's interest focuses on the rural community life and that's why it is full of cultural references regarding the Romanian village. For those readers who are not familiar with this linguistic code, this one can be impenetrable and incomprehensible. It was translated into French by Maria Ivănescu in 1986. We consider

that this type of novel is almost untranslatable because of its rustic language, gestures and expressions that characterize the Romanian peasant. The translator acquires the status of intercultural negotiator. Maria Ivănescu wants to transpose into French language the Romanian expressions in order to obtain a reversal effect referring to the content of the source language. It is obvious that the characters in this novel can't act as French people because they are not able to speak as real French. One of the points that embarrassed the translator is the rural language which makes a description of those rural objects forming the surrounding reality. The translator provides explanatory notes for those cultural terms that can't be replaced by an equivalent term in the target language. She wants her readers to enter the atmosphere of the peasant world, to identify with the Romanian customs and to understand the rustic language. She does everything in order to bring the French public to relive the atmosphere of the original language text.

Translating the culturemes refers to a strategy of providing information to the public of the target language about an unknown universe. This information could not cover entirely the distance between the two cultures, but we may think that it opens a 'window' for the original text. The translator may preserve the cultureme in the target text under the form of comprehensible terms.

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