

TRANSLATORS' DILEMMAS IN TRANSLATING POETRY: THE CASE OF GANE TODOROVSKI'S POETRY IN ENGLISH

Silvana Neshkovska¹, Sonja Kitanovska-Kimovska²,
Daniela Andonovska-Trajkovska³

^{1,3} Faculty of Education, "St. Kliment Ohridski" University, Bitola, Republic of North Macedonia

² Faculty of Philology, "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" University, Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia

Abstract: Poetry translation is considered the most challenging type of translation. Translators are faced with many dilemmas as they work on several different levels simultaneously in an attempt to preserve in the target language as many features of a particular poem as possible. This is not an easily achievable aim, especially, if the poems are products of a poetic mastermind who skilfully juggled with a range of poetic features.

The study at hand aims to analyse the treatment that the poetry of one such poetic genius, Gane Todorovski, received when rendered from Macedonian into English. More precisely, given the profound differences between Macedonian and English, the study investigates how specific poetic features such as rhyme, rhythm, sound, tropes, word choice and word order have been handled in the translation. It also tries to provide answers to several common translators' dilemmas that obligatorily emerge in the process of poetry translation.

The study shows that the translators of Gane Todorovski's poetry have been fully aware of the poetic qualities of the original poems and have made every effort to preserve them in the translation, although some losses were practically unavoidable.

Key words: translation, poetry, lexis, tropes, rhyme

Corresponding author: Dr. Silvana Neshkovska is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Education – Bitola, St. Kliment Ohridski University - Bitola. She teaches a number of courses in English linguistics such as Syntax, Pragmatics, Contrastive Analysis and Phonetics and Phonology as well as Translation, at the Department of Macedonian and Other Foreign Languages. Her main research interests lie in the field of pragmatics, contrastive analysis, English language teaching and translation. She has published a number of research paper in various domestic and foreign scientific journals.

e-mail: silvana.neshkovska@uklo.edu.mk

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4417-7783>

*Other authors's notes at the end

Copyright © 2021 Silvana Neshkovska, Sonja Kitanovska-Kimovska, Daniela Andonovska-Trajkovska

Article history: Received: 6 December 2020; Reviewed: 10 February 2021; Revised: 16 March 2021; Accepted: 21 March 2021; Published: 19 April 2021



This open access article is published and distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

Citation (APA): Neshkovska, S., Kitanovska-Kimovska, S., & Andonovska-Trajkovska, D. (2021). Translators' dilemmas in translating poetry: The case of Gane Todorovski's poetry in English. *Studies in Linguistics, Culture, and FLT*, 9(1), 21-39. doi: 10.46687/SILC.2021.v09i01.002.

Introduction

Poetry is one of the most intricate literary genres. Its uniqueness stems from the delicate web of a number of distinct features such as sound, lexis, marked/condensed syntax, poetic imagery, tropes, rhyme, rhythm, etc., intended to challenge the readers' senses; to invoke powerful images in their mind; to elevate their spirit; to provoke them to experience strong emotions; to inspire them, as well as to delight them.

Or as Jones (2011, pp. 1-2) put it:

...poems typically have one or more of the following features: they use 'marked' language; they have some type of regular linguistic patterning; they exploit the sounds, semantic nuances or associations of words, and not just semantic meanings; they convey meanings beyond the 'propositional content' (i.e. the surface semantics) of the words and grammar; they can give intense emotional, spiritual or philosophical experience to their readers and listeners; and they have high social and cultural status.

The process of writing poetry has always been accompanied by another equally important process – translation of poetry. Translating poetry, in fact, has been a universally accepted practice for more than 2000 years. The work of poetry translators is complex and wide-ranging, but it has rich real-world effects too (Jones, 2011, p. 4). Thus, poetry translation has established itself as a noble act with which numerous masterfully written poems have been made accessible to new audiences. As a consequence, it has contributed to the enrichment of world literatures and it can even be credited with bringing distinct cultures closer together. Evidently, poetry translation helps not just the source-language community to assert itself internationally, but it also benefits the receptor culture, as it serves as a means of revitalizing one's own poetry (Mao, 1922/2004 in Jones, 2011, p. 7).

Poetry translation necessitates working on several levels simultaneously – phonological, lexical, semantic, syntactic, literary or aesthetic, and cultural – with the aim of retaining the same emotions and the same invisible message and, as a result, eventually, achieving the same effect in the TL as in the SL (Arsova-Nikolij, 1999).

The general belief is that in order to deal with the complicated task of poetry translation translators need to be poets themselves, or at the very least, they should have a deep poetic sensitivity and immense appreciation of poetry (Landers, 2001). Poetry translators are typically concerned with interpreting the different layers of meaning of a source poem; relaying this interpretation reliably, and/or "creating a poem in the target language which is readable and enjoyable in its own right, with merit as an independent, literary text" (Phillips, 2001, pp. 23-24; Boase-Beier, 2004, pp. 25-26; Lefevere, 1975; Honig, 1985, p.

177; Flynn, 2004, pp. 281-282; Jones, 2006a in Jones, 2011, p. 3). Proficiency in the target and source language and culture is a core requirement for poetry translators. Moreover, close familiarity with all poetic intricacies and delicacies is mandatory for all who set out to translate poetry. Bennani (2011, p. 136) provides a neat description of the basic requirements that translators should meet in order to translate poetry successfully:

The translator of poetry must be fluent in and sensitive to the source language; he must know the source language's cultural matrices, its etymologies, syntax, and grammar, as well as its poetic tradition. He must culturally and politically identify himself wholeheartedly with the original poet. He must penetrate the exteriority of the original text and lose himself in its intertextuality. To make the translation become a poem, the translator must also meet successfully the expectations and sensibilities of the poetic tradition of the target language. Thus, the most successful translators of poetry are frequently those who happen to be bilingual and bicultural and, above all, poets in the target Language.

Bearing this in mind, it seems quite reasonable to infer that the task of translators is sometimes harder than that of poets – while the poet creates, the translator recreates and his choices are “limited and dictated by someone else whose priorities were self-imposed” (Bennett, 2001, p. 3).

The aim of this study is to discuss the translation of Gane Todorovski's poetry into English. For the purposes of this study, two poems from his collection of translated poems in English (Todorovski, 1976) were subjected to a detailed analysis. The translated poems were studied alongside with their original Macedonian counterparts. The analysis focuses on the following poetic features: rhyme, rhythm, sound (alliteration, consonance, assonance, etc.), tropes (metaphors, simile, hyperbole, personification, etc.), lexis (culture specific terms, neologisms and archaisms), and word order. The purpose was to determine how these have been handled in the translation, given the profound differences between Macedonian and English.

Theoretical background

Is poetry translation possible?

Translation theorists still cannot reach a consensus on whether translation of poetry is a possible or impossible undertaking. Those who view it as an “impossible task” claim that poetry is “what is lost in the translation” (Frost, 1969 in Dastjerdi et. al, 2008) and call it “the art of the impossible” (Landers, 2001). The “untranslatability” of poetry is attributed to the impossibility to recreate an exact replica of the original poem in a different language. Namely,

due to linguistic and cultural differences, poetry ‘suffers’ inevitable distortions in lexis, sense, syntax, sound, structure, etc., when rendered into the target language, and, in most cases, ends up either in a compressed or expanded form (Lefevere, 1975, p. 384).

Conversely, the proponents of the opposite stance insist that all barriers in poetry translation can be adequately addressed (Arsova-Nikolij, 1999, p. 244). They acknowledge that some aspects of a poem may be lost in the process of translation, but still that should not avert translators from translating the poem. In that respect, the process of poetry translation is sometimes compared to a bowl of water which if “moved from sink to table, some water may spill and be lost”; however, the goal of the translator should be “to keep as much water in the bowl as possible” (Bennett, 2001, p. 1). Some even go further and argue that there is nothing really “lost” in poetry translation; on the contrary, there is always something “gained” by the birth of a text which will not merely be a replica of the original but will have the ability to achieve a sort of equivalence to the source language text (Benjamin, 1968, p. 76 in Tisgam, 2014).

Major problems in translating poetry

The translation of poetry from the source to the target language and culture entails a transfer of a long list of features intrinsic to poetry. According to Kjulavkova (1989), the figurative features of poetry are marked by the use of three types of stylistic devices: phono-morphological (assonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia, parallelisms like anaphora, epiphora, etc.), syntactic (inversion, ellipsis, asyndeton, polysyndeton, etc.) and semantic (metaphor, personification, allegory, epithet, etc.). In addition, there are the versification features such as rhyme, rhythm, number of stanzas, number of lines per stanza, etc., as well as the choice of lexis. These will be briefly discussed in this section from the point of view of the challenges they present for the translator.

Sound is one of the crucial aesthetic factors in poetry, but, at the same time, it can be extremely troublesome. The sound aspect of poetry subsumes combinations of sounds that generate sound effects known as assonance, consonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia, etc. The translator’s task is to retain these sound-related features of poems in the translated texts as much as possible. However, translation practice shows that since the semantic value of a poem is normally considered cardinal, in most cases, the importance of sound is diminished and sound is sacrificed in the translation process (Newmark, 1981). The only exception is made when the entire beauty of the poem is deemed to lie in the sound effects, and in such circumstances, the translator is bound to preserve them regardless the cost.

The unusual or marked **word order** is yet another intrinsic feature of poetry which contributes to the creation of meaning of poems. The inversion as well as

the repetition of certain words, phrases, and even entire sentences is a frequent phenomenon in poetry (Arsova-Nikolij, 1999, p. 243), and should be adequately dealt with in the translation as failure to do so could trigger loss in both the meaning and the aesthetic value of the poem.

The soul of poetry lies in the use of **figurative language**, or the so-called **metaphorical mode of expression** that transcends traditional semantic limitations of language (Landers, 2001). Figurative language gives rise to ambiguity and polysemy; this, in turn, leads to many possible layers of interpretation. For translators to render metaphors, similes, personification, hyperbole, etc., in the target language can be particularly tricky, as these too are often language- or culture-specific. The choice then is either to find a trope in the target language that conveys an equivalent meaning or feeling, or to translate it in a way that allows the reader to see the same correlation between the components of the original trope, and the images contained in it (Creativeblogger, 2016).

Rhyme is another aspect of poetry that very frequently presents translators with “unsurmountable” obstacles. Intended to bind lines together in stanzas, and to help in organizing the structure of the poem (Arsova-Nikolij, 1999, p. 243), rhyme presents translators with a double challenge – to find rhyming words in the target language to replace the ones used in the source text, and, at the same time, to preserve the same semantic meaning of the words. Translation practice shows that almost any attempt to preserve the rhyme pattern of the original is bound to trigger certain alterations in terms of the number/gender of nouns; word class; word order; or even the choice of lexis (Arsova-Nikolij, 1999, p. 248).

Another important aspect of poetry is **rhythm**, i.e. the interchangeable use of stressed and unstressed syllables per line (Arsova-Nikolij, 1999, p. 243). Reproducing the same rhythmical pattern or meter in the translated text can be extremely challenging as in each language, the accent, number or length of syllables in words vary to a certain extent. Hence, the consensus reached among scholars is that the poetry should be translated in the rhythmical pattern acceptable in the target language, not in the rhythmical pattern used in the original poem which is typical of poetry writing in the source language.

Finally, the **choice of lexis** is also of paramount importance in poetry as it is marked by a frequent usage of peculiar lexemes such as archaisms or neologisms (Arsova-Nikolij, 1999, p. 243). It is sometimes difficult to preserve these in the target text, and that, in turn, affects the beauty and the form of the translation (Tisgam, 2014). Poetry translators often struggle hard with culture-bound words or expressions which present yet another common décor of numerous poems (Jafari & Karimnia, 2015). In translating culture-bound words and expressions, they may choose from a wide range of procedures: literal translation, transference, naturalization, cultural equivalent, functional

equivalent, description equivalent, classifier, componential analysis, deletion, couplets, notes, addition, glosses, reduction, and synonymy (Newmark, 1988).

Translation methods used in poetry translation

Although poetry translation is frequently compared to “an unanalysed black box”, Lefevere (1992) identified a number of translation methods which poetry translators have at their disposal depending on what their priority is. These include phonological translation, literal translation, rhythmic translation, translation into prose, translation into rhymed poetry, translation into poetry without rhyme (blank verse), and interpretive translation. Lefevere points to the fact that in the past the most prevalent method was translating rhymed poetry; in contemporary times, however, poetry is commonly translated into prose, as translators are more concerned with the meaning than with the other poetic aspects.

Nevertheless, practice shows that the final versions of translated poems rarely fall into one of the archetypes proposed by Lefevere, as translated poems are usually hybrid in nature (Jones, 2011). A relevant point to be mentioned in this context is that the choice of the translation method/s, to a great extent, depends on what the target audience expects and regards as poetry (Landers, 2001).

Translator’s dilemmas

Confronted with such a wide range of challenges and possibilities for the selection of a translation method, according to Savory (1957 in Popovska, 2004, p. 25) the translator faces six dilemmas:

1. Should translation give the words of the original or should translation give the ideas of the original?
2. Should translation read like an original work or should translation read like a translation?
3. Should translation reflect the style of the original or should translation reflect the style of the translator?
4. Should translation read as a contemporary of the original or should translation read as a contemporary of the translator?
5. May translation add to or omit from the original or translation may never add to or omit from the original?
6. Should verse lines be translated in prose or should verse lines be translated in verse?

In this paper we will try to see how these dilemmas have been resolved in the poems under study.

Purpose and methodology

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to provide an analysis of the translations of Gane Todrovski's poems into English in order to see how the translators have solved the challenges posed by the various poetic features of Todorovski's poetry. The key question of the study is how the translators have solved the thorny dilemmas of poetry translation given the significant linguistic, cultural and historical gaps between the source and the target language.

Sample

The study is based on two poems from Gane Todorovski's *Poems* collection, published in England in 1976 and translated by Ljubica Todorova-Janešlieva and Graham Reid: "Љубовна" (Ljubovna), originally published in 1964, and its translation "Love Song", and "Во доцна пролет кон Нерези" (Vo docna prolet kon Nerezi), originally published in 1956, and its translation "Towards Nerezi in late spring" (see Appendix).

These two poems were selected, first and foremost, for the translation challenges they offer. The former is a lyrical love poem with a very neat and precise versification, with a clear structure of stanzas and rhyme scheme. It also makes extensive use of metaphorical language, including metaphor, simile and personification. The latter, a patriotic poem in which the poet celebrates certain aspects of his/her homeland, is challenging on the lexical plane. It is marked with a truly ingenuous language use with a range of neologisms and archaisms. In short, the selection of these poems is made based on the poetic features they are characterized with: rhyme, rhythm, sound (alliteration, consonance, assonance, etc.), tropes (metaphors, simile, hyperbole, personification, etc.), lexis (culture specific terms, neologisms and archaisms), and word order. Given the linguistic and cultural differences between English and Macedonian, the aim of the study is to analyze how the translators have handled these "troublesome" poetic features when transferring them from Macedonian into English, i.e. what they have sacrificed and what they have managed to preserve in the translation.

Methodology

Our research follows Popovska's analysis approach (2004, pp. 8-9). First, we provide a short analysis of the original text and its significance. Then we provide a selected, but thorough comparison between the original and the translation, putting special emphasis on the differences. Finally, we analyse the effect achieved in terms of what is gained and what is lost and comment on the translation as a whole.

The research is limited to the two poems mentioned above because it is solely qualitatively oriented without any quantitative pretensions. Nevertheless, despite its limited scope, the detailed analysis and the findings are sufficiently indicative of the overall translation approach employed by the translators in dealing with the translational challenges.

Analysis and results

Gane Todorovski's poetry

Gane Todorovski (1929-2010) is a Macedonian poet, translator, professor, essayist, literary critic, historian and publicist. He belongs to the third generation of Macedonian poets and writers. He authored 10 collections of poems, 7 publications of literary studies and criticism and many publicist writings. His poetic code is specific and recognizable due to his neo-archaisms ("Todorovski turns to the spoken language, to the vernacular, in order to renew the lexis in his poetry" (Blaze Koneski in Vangelov, 1993, p. 72)) and neologisms, rhyme and rhythm, metaphorical epithet, assonance, alliteration and paronomasia, but also due to his love, patriotic and metapoetic motifs which are embodied in naturalistic, highly aesthetic descriptions, frequent apostrophes and rhetorical questions. Todorovski's lyric elements are "fluid, metaphorically enigmatic and have clear significations of existential drama" (Drugovac, 1990, p. 58). According to Gjurchinov, Todorovski makes the greatest impression with his linguistic filigree skills: "...his linguistic filigree skills have reached perfection expressing all the ranges of trembling, mellifluous, fragile poetic melody" (Gjurchinov, 1983, p. 84). A number of well-known literary critics have written about him including Miodrag Drugovac (2006, pp. 351-354), Atanas Vangelov (1993), Milan Gjurchinov (2006, pp. 355-360), Branko Varoshlija (2006, pp. 365-368), Gjeorgji Stardelov (2006, pp. 377-380), Vele Smilevski (2006, pp. 387-390), Rade Siljan (2006, pp. 13-28), Luan Starova (2006, pp. 379-393), Ante Popovski (2006, pp. 381-383), Paskal Gilevski (2006, pp. 573-579), to name but a few. Gane Todorovski's poetry has been translated into English and other foreign languages.

Analysis of "Love Song" vs. "Ljubovna"

As the title of the poem suggests, the poet dedicates this poem to his beloved, i.e. to the feeling of love he and his lover cherish towards each other. In the entire poem this feeling of love or the poet's infatuation is metaphorically compared to a river. More specifically, just like a river, whose water supply changes throughout the year across the different seasons, their love also has its own swings – at one point it is strong and intense, but then, for some reason, it withdraws and is gone for a while. The poet is clearly not destitute because

of this changeable state of their love; in fact, he is so positive about their love that he describes it as “endless”, and as a story without an end, i.e. without an epilogue.

As to **the sound effects**, some of the lines in the original are marked for alliteration (repetition of the initial consonant sound). In the translation the alliteration is mostly lost (e.g. 1); although, some attempts to compensate for that loss via alternative sounds and sound effects are noted (e.g. 2, e.g. 3). Example 1 also displays paronomasia with similar-sounding words, which is not preserved in the translation.

e.g. 1 <i>та палави и плави</i>	<i>And romps and flood</i>
e.g. 2 <i>Догледање! До прва пролет!</i>	<i>Farewell! Till the coming spring!</i>
e.g. 3 <i>што мени лика лете</i>	<i>which alters its appearance in summer</i>

Regarding **the word order**, due to the significant differences between English and Macedonian syntax, the word order in the translated text is partly altered (e.g. 4, e.g. 5, e.g. 6).

e.g. 4 <i>Епилог нашата драма нема</i>	<i>Our story lacks an epilogue</i>
e.g. 5 <i>што едно влече, друго носи,</i>	<i>which takes one thing away and brings another</i>
e.g. 6 <i>та, како титач капка проси</i>	<i>beggar-like it craves a drop</i>

In the examples above extracted from the original poem, the object is displaced from its usual position, which is after the verb. Since the emphasis is placed on the object, these sentences are marked syntactically and, hence, stylistically. Although this same movement (‘topicalization’) is possible in English, still it is not applied in the translation of this poem. The translators obviously preferred to observe the regular SVOCA rule instead, according to which the object comes immediately after the verb.

Another visible difference was detected in relation to the subject. Namely, in Macedonian, the subject can be omitted as the information it carries regarding the doer of the action is encoded in the verb itself via a suffix attached to the verb. The poet clearly opted for this option in some of his lines. In the English translation, however, the subject is overtly stated, as subjectless sentences are practically impossible in English even in the realm of poetry where the syntactic rules could be much more easily bent and disrespected (see e.g. 7).

e.g. 7 <i>кога сме најмногу здрави!</i>	<i>when we are in the best of health!</i>
---	---

The figurative language use in the poem is marked by an underlying ‘river’ metaphor with which the poet’s love/lover is compared to a river, which, at one point, is completely dry that it begs for a drop of water, and, then, at another point, it is noisy and full of water, ready to overflow (e.g. 8). The ‘river’ metaphor is completely retained in the translation as well.

e.g. 8 *Таа е бучна, кога е полна,
та палави и плави –
таква е нашата љубов: болна*

*When full it is full of noise
And romps and flood –
Such is our love: ailing*

The poet upholds the overarching ‘river’ metaphor with several instances of simile which are also neatly preserved in the translated text (e.g. 9, e.g. 10, e.g. 11).

e.g. 9 *Епилог нашата драма нема,
таа е бескрај, ко река*

*our story lacks an epilogue
it is endless as the river is*

e.g. 10 *та, како питач капка проси*

and beggar-like it craves a drop

e.g. 11 *Ќе дотрчаи ко река,
за да оживееш опустен голет,
дарежна, топла, мека...*

*You will come running like a river
Bringing life to the bare hillside
Generous, warm ad soft ...*

Speaking of the figurative language used, apart from the abovementioned metaphors and similes, the author uses personification as well. Namely, by stating that their love is ailing, the poet evidently ascribes human-like features to their inconstant love (see e.g. 8). Generally, the personification is preserved in the translation, apart from example 3, where the translators have opted for the word “appearance” rather than “face”.

In terms of its **versification features**, the original poem comprises four stanzas, i.e. four quatrains, and has a very neat and regular ABAB rhyme pattern. In the English translation, the four quatrain scheme is preserved; however, the rhyme is completely lost. Evidently, for the translators it was much more salient to preserve the semantic content of the poem than to replicate the rhyme pattern. Regarding the rhythm, the original and the translation have different rhythmical patterns, as illustrated by e.g. 8. Whereas the original meter is: dactyl, trochee, dactyl, trochee/secundus paeon, amphibrach/ dactyl, dactyl, trochee, trochee; the translation of the same verse lines displays the following meter: iamb, anapest, iamb/iamb, iamb/ trochee, trochee, spondee. This may be reasonably expected in view of the differences between English and Macedonian pronunciation and stress distribution.

As far as **the word choice** is concerned, there is a clear attempt on the part of the translators to achieve almost complete faithfulness. Still, in the translated text, few instances of lexical “infidelity” emerge. Thus, for example, there is no doubt that the use of the word “драма” (drama/play) in the original poem was purposefully selected, as “drama” is frequently used in the context of love relationships, especially, when things between the love partners go sour and they do irrational things. In this case it is used to allude to the changeable nature of their love, which is marked by ups and downs – happy moments and disappointments. For some reason, the translators decided to downplay this specific allusion and replaced the word “drama” with a more neutral term, “story”. Then, the verb “проси” (to beg), in the English translation is rendered as “crave”, a verb that carries a completely different semantic load and evokes

a completely different imagery than its original counterpart. Similarly, the verb “влече” (to drag) is rendered as “takes away”. This word choice in the translation distorts slightly the original meaning and poetic imagery as well, because dragging implies using force and trying to control someone/something that opposes that force; whereas, the phrasal verb “take away” simply implies removing, i.e. displacing someone/something from its original position.

Speaking of word choice, Gane Todorovski is well known for his creative language use, i.e. for the frequent recourse to both archaisms and neologisms. In this specific poem, two instances of neologisms were detected. These are the verb “палави” which is, in fact, a result of the word formation process of conversion since the word already exists in Macedonian as an adjective meaning “naughty”. In this context, the verb “палави” has found a perfect counterpart in the English verb “romp”. The other instance of a neologism is the noun “голет”, used to refer to a hillside which is barren or completely deforested. The noun “голет” is clearly derived by means of the word formation process of derivation, where the adjective “гол”, meaning “nude/naked”, is taken as a root to which the suffix “ет” is added. In the English translation, a neutral term, “bare hillside”, is used in its stead, which clearly lacks the peculiarity of the original expression. The verb “мени” (to change), on the other hand, illustrates the author’s inclination towards using archaic words. In the contemporary Macedonian language, this verb is completely substituted by a similar verb, “менува”. The same is the case with the noun “лете” (summer) which is used in the poem instead of its standard Macedonian equivalent - “лето”. These nuances are not rendered in the translation.

*Analysis of “Vo docna prolet kon Nerezi” vs.
“Towards Nerezi in late spring”*

In this poem, the poet depicts the landscape of a beautiful site suitable for relaxation called Nerezi, located near the capital city – Skopje. He provides a picturesque description of the hilly terrain as well as the view it provides of the plain and the capital city below. Apart from the description of the beautiful nature, the poet widens the scope of the poem and inserts subtle references to certain social aspects related to that place. In fact, he briefly hints at its historic past, and, then, brings to the forefront contemporary aspects related to the local inhabitants and their way of life.

This poem does not abound with **sound effects**. Our analysis has identified only two instances of alliteration (e.g. 12 and 13 below) and one instance of assonance (e.g. 12 on the vowel “o”). The translators have managed to preserve the alliteration although in a slightly different fashion, whereas the assonance has not been preserved.

e.g. 12 *На дофат поглед околу: засевки лебородни
и мали простирки лозја, лозја, лозја.*

*As far as the eye can see: bread-bearing fields
And in short stretches, vineyards, vineyards,
vineyards.*

e.g. 13 *Крај патот што ластареше: бресја, бојлии,
но патот: брзоодица*

*By the branching road majestic elms,
On the road itself swift steps.*

As far as **the word order** is concerned, since the style of the poet in this specific poem is rather narrative and prose-like, the lines are run-on-lines (not end-stop-lines) and the usual SVOCA word order prevails in the poem. The translators evidently did not have any major problems in preserving that aspect almost completely in the translated text (e.g. 14). Even though in e.g. 14 the subject is omitted in the original (which, as mentioned previously, is a permissible and legitimate move in Macedonian), in the translation, in accordance with the English grammar rules, the subject is overtly stated.

e.g. 14 *Го пресртнуваме забрзано поточето*

We happen on the hurrying brook,

Due to the narrative style of the poem, however, occasionally the accent in the original was placed on the information encoded in the adjunct, and, consequently, the adjunct was placed in sentence initial position. Again that same tendency was reflected in the translation too (e.g. 15).

e.g. 15 *Најчесто, токму што се разделило,
ја искачуваме оваа нагорнина.*

*Often enough just as day dawns
we climb this slope.*

One interesting finding to be highlighted is that some of the sentences in the original poem were marked with a completely atypical syntax. More precisely, apart from the marked word order, these sentences also contained ellipsis on the verb and displayed repetition of certain words (e.g. 16, e.g. 17). The terseness of expression in these sentences was observed in the English version of the poem as well.

e.g. 16 *На дофат поглед околу: засевки
лебородни
и мали простирки лозја, лозја, лозја.*

*As far as the eye can see: bread-bearing fields
And in short stretches, vineyards, vineyards,
vineyards.*

e.g. 17 *Крај патот што ластареше:
бресја, бојлии,
но патот: брзоодица.*

*By the branching road majestic elms,
On the road itself swift steps.*

Although the author's style as to the syntactic structure of sentences is clearly respected to a great extent in the translation, still few instances were spotted where the word order suffers major alterations in the translation (e.g. 18, e.g. 19). Thus, in e.g. 18, in the original poem the object is displaced and comes before the verb, whereas in the translated text the object comes after the verb and follows the regular SVOCA pattern in English. Moreover, the word order of the two adjuncts ("given over to gossip" and "under the chestnut trees") is also changed in the translation probably in an attempt to achieve greater naturalness in English. Example 20 also shows differences in grammatical voice. In the

Macedonian original “Skopje” is the receiver of the action (“го пржат”), where the passive object implies that Skopje is powerless and cannot respond, but bear the heat. The English translation gives it an active role (“broils”), which may be interpreted as if the action is intentional.

- | | |
|---|---|
| e.g. 18 <i>Жените веленца постилаат
под коштаниите, веќе зазборени.</i> | <i>The women spread their woollen rugs
Given over to gossip under the chestnut trees.</i> |
| e.g. 19 <i>в пресрет; нерамнини пречекливо зеленило</i> | <i>hospitable hillocks of green come to meet us</i> |
| e.g. 20 <i>По некој поглед надолу лунса,
надолу в полето,
каде што Скопје го пржат горештините.</i> | <i>The casual glance strays down,
Down to the plain below
where Skopje broils in the summer heat.</i> |

Due to the narrative and fact-stating descriptive style which predominates in the poem, the use of **figurative language** is rather scarce. Apart from several instances of personification, with which human-like features are ascribed to the landscape described in the poem, no other figures of speech have been traced. Thus, the hill has a hunched back just like a human being; the greenery on the hill is hospitable; the brook is in a hurry; the visitor’s gaze wonders around, whereas the scorching heat has cooking skills and is frying the capital city (e.g. 21, e.g. 22, e.g. 23). All these instances of personification are neatly preserved in the translation as well.

- | | |
|---|---|
| e.g. 21 <i>Ридот со благи грпки лулее чекори морни,
в пресрет; нерамнини пречекливо зеленило</i> | <i>This hill’s gentle hummocks cradle wearied feet,
hospitable hillocks of green come to meet us.</i> |
| e.g. 22 <i>Го пресртнуваме забрано поточето,</i> | <i>We happen on the hurrying brook,</i> |
| e.g. 23 <i>По некој поглед надолу лунса,
надолу в полето,
каде што Скопје го пржат горештините.</i> | <i>The casual glance strays down,
Down to the plain below
where Skopje broils in the summer heat.</i> |

With regard to the **versification features**, this poem consists of 5 stanzas but does not follow any strict stanza scheme as the number of lines per stanza varies, with the shortest stanza being composed of three and the longest of five lines. This free stanza pattern is followed closely in the English translation, too. The original poem is not rhymed; consequently, the translation lacks rhyme as well. As for the rhythm, the original and the translation are marked by different metrical patterns. As example 21 shows, the Macedonian original meter is trochee, amphibrach, trochee, trochee, dactyl, trochee; whereas in the translation the meter is: amphibrach, secunduc paeon, secunduc paeon, secunduc paeon.

What makes this poem particularly challenging, though, in terms of translation is **word choice**. The poem abounds with culture-specific terms referring to: a past ruler whose name, “Султан Суи”, is associated with the site described in the poem; a community of people who inhabit this place called “торбеши” (Macedonians who during the Turkish rule accepted the Islam and converted to Muslims); “Св. Петка”, a name of a village nearby, named after the saint, St. Petka; “веленца”, a specific type of rugs woven on a loom, and “матеница”,

a type of homemade yoghurt that the locals made and sold in the capital. The translators adopted a variety of procedures in dealing with these culture-specific terms. Thus, in the case of “Sultain-sui” they opted for borrowing the term; the same is the case with the other proper noun, i.e. the name of the village, St. Petka; the term “торбеши” is translated by means of a neutral and general term – “peasants”; whereas, “веленца” (woollen rugs) and “матеница” (curds and sour milk) are both rendered in English by means of a brief description.

The original also abounds in an impressive number of neologisms, derived from already existing words. These include the following: “луле” (which comes from the verb “лула” – “to swing”); “морни” (derived from the adjective “уморни” – “tired”); “засевки” (stems from the noun “посеви” – “fields planted with crops”); “лебородни” (a noun derived by blending the noun “леб” and the adjective “родни”); “ластареше” (a verb derived by means of conversion of the noun “ластар” which corresponds with the English “young branch/twig”); “доброутрата” (a noun coined by blending the two words that comprise the salutation “good morning”); “лунза” (a verb most probably derived from the verb “лута”, which means to “wander aimlessly about”), “простирки” (a noun derived by conversion of the verb “простира” which means “to stretch”), “брзоодица” (a noun derived by blending the adverb “брзо” and the verb “оди”, meaning “fast walking”) and “часипол” (a compound noun derived by blending the components of the time expression “час и половина”, meaning “an hour and a half”). For some of these neologisms, the translators managed to find alternative means to successfully transfer them in the target language while preserving their peculiarity at the same time. Thus, the alliteration in “swift steps” is used to compensate for the lack of a suitable compound substitute in English for “брзоодица”; the archaic phrase “bid good morrow” is used to replace in English the newly coined Macedonian noun “доброутрата”; then, for “засевки лебородни” the translators tried to come up with a similar phrase in English, both in form and in meaning, “bread-bearing fields”; and an archaism is used in the case of “морни” - “wearied”. However, the translators have not “saved” the peculiarity of all the neologisms and for some they opted for an easy way out and chose a rather literal translation. Thus, for instance, the compound noun “часипол” is rendered as “an hour and a half”; “лунза” as “strays”; “простирки” as “stretches”; “ластареше” as “branching”, etc.

Finally, the complexity of the lexis used is further illustrated by instances of archaic words – “бојлии” (an adjective borrowed from Turkish, meaning “tall”), rendered in the translated text as “majestic”, and colloquial terms, presumably, included to add to the local colour, so vividly and masterfully depicted in the poem – “коштани” (chestnuts) and “слагаат” (to descend), whose standard Macedonian counterpart are “костени” and “слегуваат”, respectively. The fact that, in the translated text, these terms are rendered with their standard English

equivalents, obviously, implies that some subtle nuances of this richly nuanced poem are inevitably lost because of that.

Conclusion

This paper set out to investigate how translators have dealt with the intrinsic difficulties of poetry translation on a set of Macedonian poems by Gane Todorovski and their English counterparts. The questions posed by the study were how the translators managed to transfer the specific poetic features of Todorovski's poetry and how they resolved the typical translators' dilemmas.

With regard to the first question, the analysis of the two poems and their translations shows that the translators have been fully aware of the poetic qualities of the original and have made every effort to preserve them in the translation. In the case of the first poem, where versification and semantic features prevail, the analysis demonstrated that the dominant translation approach was to keep the content before the form. Whereas the translators have preserved as many poetic features as they were able to, still, when faced with the choice between form and meaning, they opted for meaning. In the case of the second poem, which is rich in lexical stylistic features, the analysis shows that the translators had the difficult task of transferring the lexical richness of the Macedonian original. Here, too, they demonstrated a strong awareness about the challenges of the original and a tendency to convey the lexical qualities of the Macedonian poet to the English audience, which was more successful at times and less successful at others.

Based on the analysis, we can draw the following conclusions about how the translators resolved their dilemmas. With regard to the first dilemma of whether to translate the words of the original or the ideas of the original, there is a tendency to preserve the words of the original, which at times helps preserving the ideas of the original, too. At other times, preserving the words does not necessarily lead to preserving the ideas. The second dilemma of whether the translation should read as an original work or as a translation is resolved at the end of the latter. The translations in most respects read as translations. Regarding the third dilemma of whether the translation reflects the style of the original or the style of the translator, our analysis demonstrated that the translations mostly follow the style of the original. As for the fourth dilemma of whether the translation reads as contemporary of the original or contemporary of the translator, we can say that it is not relevant for the poems analysed as the time difference between the originals and their translations is rather small for us to expect any large discrepancies. When it comes to the fifth dilemma of whether the translation may or may not add to or omit from the original, the results showed that both translations opted for the first alternative. Finally, the answer to the sixth dilemma of whether verse should be translated in prose or verse can

be two-sided: both poems have been translated in verse, if we take ‘verse’ to mean the visual layout of the text. However, following Popovska (2004, p. 121), if we understand ‘verse’ in its primary poetic meaning, to refer to the formal versification features of the poem, then we can conclude that both poems have been translated in prose.

The results of this paper have confirmed the long-standing opinion that the translation of poetry is a delicate and demanding task even for translator who are poets themselves, translators with full mastery of the languages involved, inherent poetic sensibility and superior translation skills. This paper has provided answers to our initial questions, but it has also raised other ones. Can these conclusions be extended to other sets of data including poems of the same poet, poems of other poets or, even, poetry translation in other language combinations? Would other translators resolve the dilemmas in the same way? These questions were outside the scope of this paper, so we leave them to future studies to address.

References:

- Arsova-Nikolijk, L. (1999). *Preveduvanje: teorija i prakтика*. Skopje.
- Bennani, B. (1981). Translating Arabic poetry: An interpretative, intertextual approach. In G. M. Rose (Ed.), *Translation spectrum essays in theory and practice* (pp. 135-140). New York: State University of New York Press.
- Bennett, G. (2001). Translation of poetry/ poetry of translation: Some thoughts on transpoiesis. *Aufgabe 2*, 1-9. <https://docplayer.net/64063799-Translation-of-poetry-poetry-of-translation-some-thoughts-on-transpoiesis-1.html>
- Benjamin, W. (1968). The task of the translator. *Illuminations*, 69-82. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc.
- Boase-Beier, J. (2004). Knowing and not knowing: style, intention and the translation of a Holocaust poem. *Language and Literature*, 13(1), 25-35.
- Creativeblogger. (2016, September 30). Translating poetry – what are the main challenges? Retrieved March 13, 2021, from <https://creativetranslation.com/blog-post-translating-poetry-main-challenges/>
- Dastjerdi, H. V., Hakimshafaai, H., & Jannesaari, Z. (2008). Translation of poetry: Towards a practical model for translation analysis and assessment of poetic discourse. *Journal of Language & Translation*, 9(1), 7-40.
- Drugovac, M. (1990). *Kon makedonskata knizhevna sinteza*. Skopje: Makedonska kniga.
- Drugovac, M. (2006). Za poezijata na Gane Todorovski. In R. Siljan (Ed.), *Izbrani dela. Poezija/ Gane Todorovski, tom 2* (pp. 351-354). Skopje: Matica Makedonska.
- Flynn, P. (2004). Skopos theory: an ethnographic enquiry. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatogy*, 12(4), pp. 270-285.
- Frost, W. (1969). *Dryden and the art of translation*. New Haven, CON: Yale University Press.

- Gjurchinov, M. (1983). *Sovremena makedonska knizhevnost*. Skopje: Misl.
- Gjurchinov, M. (2006). Stihovi i nespokojstva. In R. Siljan (Ed.), *Izbrani dela. Poezija/ Gane Todorovski*, tom 2 (pp. 355-360). Skopje: Matica Makedonska.
- Gilevski, P. (2006). Vo magjepsaniot megdan. In R. Siljan (Ed.), *Izbrani dela. Poezija/ Gane Todorovski*, tom 2 (pp. 573-579). Skopje: Matica Makedonska.
- Honig, E. (1985). *The poet's other voice*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Jafari, Z., & Karimnia, A. (2015). A survey of poetry translation according to Antoine Berman's (1985) text deformation system: A case study of English translation of Book II of Mathnavi Manavi. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language research*, 2(2), 55-65.
- Jones, F. R. (2006b). Unlocking the black box: researching poetry translation processes. In M. Perteghella & E. Loffredo (Eds), *Translation and Creativity. Perspectives on Creative Writing and Translation Studies* (pp. 59-74). London / New York, Continuum.
- Jones, F. R. (2011). The translation of poetry. In K. Malmkjær & K. Windle (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies*. pp. 123-131. DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199239306.013.0013.
- Kjulavkova, K. (1989). *Odliki na lirikata*. Skopje: Nasha kniga.
- Landers, C. E. (2001). *Literary translation: A practical guide*. New Jersey: New Jersey City University.
- Lefevere, A. (1975). The translation of poetry: Some observations and a model. *Comparative Literature Studies*, 12(4), 384-392.
- Lefevere, A. (1992). *Translation, rewriting, and the manipulation of literary fame*. London: Routledge.
- Mao, D. (1922/2004). Some thoughts on translating poetry. In L. T. Chan (Ed.), *Twentieth century Chinese translation theory* (pp. 203-207). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Newmark, P. (1981). *Approaches to translation*. Oxford: University Press.
- Newmark, P. (1988). *A textbook of translation*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Phillips, P. (2001). Dethroning the dictionary. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatogy*, 9(1), 23-32.
- Popovska, S. (2004). *Prepevot pred dilemi*. Skopje: Popovka S.
- Popovski, A. (2006). Zaokruzheni poetika. In R. Siljan (Ed.), *Izbrani dela. Poezija/ Gane Todorovski*, tom 2 (pp. 381-383). Skopje: Matica Makedonska.
- Siljan, R. (2006). Poetot Gane Todorovski. In R. Siljan (Ed.), *Izbrani dela. Poezija/ Gane Todorovski*, tom 2 (pp. 13-28). Skopje: Matica Makedonska.
- Smilevski, V. (2006). Kon poetskoto delo na Gane Todorovski. In R. Siljan (Ed.), *Izbrani dela. Poezija/ Gane Todorovski*, tom 2 (pp. 387-390). Skopje: Matica Makedonska.
- Stardelov, G. (2006). Gane Todorovski ili obnova na otvoreniot stih. In R. Siljan (Ed.), *Izbrani dela. Poezija/ Gane Todorovski*, tom 2 (pp. 377-380). Skopje: Matica Makedonska.

- Starova, L. (2006). Nacionalното i univerzalното vo tvoreshtvoto na Gane Todorovski. In R. Siljan (Ed.), *Izbrani dela. Poezija/ Gane Todorovski, tom 2* (pp. 379-393). Skopje: Matica Makedonska.
- Tisgam, K. H. (2014). Translating poetry: Possibility or impossibility? *Journal of College for Education for Women*, 25(2), 511-524.
- Todorovski, G. (1976). *Poems*. Transl.: L. Todorova-Janeљlieva, G. W. Ried, University of Bradford.
- Todorovski, G. (2015, May 15). *Ljubovna*. Retrieved 10 June 2020 from <https://okno.mk/node/47045>.
- Todorovski, G. (2017, November 1). *Vo docna prolet kon Nerezi*. Retrieved 10 June 2020 from <https://okno.mk/node/67492>.
- Vangelov, A. (1993). *Mikrochitanja*. Skopje: Makedonska kniga.
- Varoshlija, B. (2006). Gane Todorovski – Apoteoza na delnikot. In R. Siljan (Ed.), *Izbrani dela. Poezija/ Gane Todorovski, tom 2* (pp. 365-368). Skopje: Matica Makedonska.

Appendix

Љубовна

Сè ли ти дадов? Сè ли си зема?
 Догледање! Што чекаш?
 Епилог нашата драма нема,
 таа е бескрај, ко река

што едно влече, друго носи,
 што мени лика лете –
 та, како питач капка проси
 од пресушениот ветер!

Таа е бучна, кога е полна,
 та палави и плави –
 таква е нашата љубов: болна
 кога сме најмногу здрави!

Догледање! До прва пролет!
 Ке дотрчаш ко река,
 за да оживееш опустен голет,
 дарежна, топла, мека...

Love song

Did I give you all? Did you take all?
 Goodbye! What are you waiting for?
 Our story lacks an epilogue
 It is endless as the river is

which takes one thing away and brings an-
 other
 which alters its appearance in summer
 and beggar-like it craves a drop
 from the parched wind!

When full it is full of noise
 And romps and flood –
 Such is our love: ailing
 when we are in the best of health!

Farewell! Till the coming spring!
 You will come running like a river
 Bringing life to the bare hillside
 Generous, warm ad soft ...

Во доцна пролет кон Нерези

Најчесто, токму што се разделило,
ја искачуваме оваа нагорнина.
Ридот со благи грпки лулее чекори
морни,
в пресрет; нерамнини пречекливо
зеленило.
На дофат поглед околу: засевки
лебородни
и мали простирки лозја, лозја, лозја.
Крај патот што ластареше: бресја,
бојлии,
по патот: брзоодица.
Го пресртнуваме забрзано поточето,
тој веселник од Султан-суи,
и доброутрата на торбешите од
Света Петка,
што слагаат в град со товар грижи
и нешто матеница за продавање.
Часипол јазење сме таму
- љубено катче починка.
Жените веленца постилаат
под коштаните, веќе заборени.
По некој поглед надолу лунса,
надолу в полето,
каде што Скопје го пржат
горештините.

Towards Nerezi in late spring

Often enough just as day dawns
we climb this slope.
This hill's gentle hummocks cradle wearied
feet,
hospitable hillocks of green come to meet us.
As far as the eye can see: bread-bearing fields
And in short stretches, vineyards, vineyards,
vineyards.
By the branching road majestic elms,
On the road itself swift steps.

We happen on the hurrying brook,
the jester of Sultan-sui,
and are bid good morrow by the St. Petka
peasants
coming down to town with a load of care
and curds and sour milk for sale.

An hour and a half scramble and we're there
in this favourite restful nook.
The women spread their woollen rugs
Given over to gossip under the chestnut trees.

The casual glance strays down,
Down to the plain below
where Skopje broils in the summer heat.

Other Authors' Notes:

Dr. Sonja Kitanovska-Kimovska is a translator and Associate Professor of English and Translation at the Department of Translation and Interpreting at Ss Cyril and Methodius University (UKIM) in Skopje. Sonja has earned her MPhil degree in English and Applied Linguistics from Cambridge University, UK, as a Chevening Scholar, and a PhD in Translation from UKIM. She has extensive experience in specialized translation. She has published a book on the translation of style and a number of scholarly research articles. Her research interests include translation and style, translator training and the translation profession.

e-mail: sonjakitanovska@yahoo.com

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0037-0434>

Dr. Daniela Andonovska-Trajkovska holds a Full professor position at the Faculty of Education-Bitola, St. Kliment Ohridski University-Bitola, Republic of North Macedonia. She teaches Methodology of Teaching Language Arts, Creative Writing, Critical Literacy, Methodology of Teaching Early Reading and Writing, etc. Andonovska-Trajkovska writes poetry, prose and literary criticism. She has published one prose book and 8 poetry books. She has won a number of prizes for her poems which have been translated and published in numerous languages all around the world.

e-mail: daniela.andonovska@uklo.edu.mk

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5418-6101>